Indigenous Folk Martial Art in India

Fighting is as ancient as man himself. This struggle to subdue another in combat, unarmed or armed, is possibly a legacy handed down to us from our ancestors. This desire for domination sowed the seeds for martial arts. The term martial arts, simply means 'arts concerned with the waging of war'. Many of the martial arts we know today, originated from ancient war skills.

India is the motherland of different fighting forms. In Sanskrit all these fighting forms are collectively known as sastravidya or dhanurveda. The initial form of martial arts started in South India. Which now has different forms and names in different parts of India. Indian epics contain accounts of so many combats, both armed & bare – handed. The Mahabharata describes a prolonged battle between Arjuna & Karna using bows, swords, trees, rocks & fists. Another unarmed battle in the Mahabharata describes two combatants boxing with clenched fists & fighting with kicks, finger strikes, knee strikes and headbutts.

Many of the popular spots mentioned in the Vedas and the epics have their origins in military training, such as wrestling (malla dwandwa), chariot – racing (ratha chalam), horse – riding (ashva rohana), boxing (musti yudhha) and archery (dhanur vidya). Yoga Sutras of Patanjali taught how to meditate single – mindedly on points located inside one's body in 3rd century BC, this skill was later used in martial arts along with various mudra (finger movements) which was taught in Yogacara Buddhism. The elements of Yoga & finger movements were incorporated with the nata dances which later took the form of different martial arts.

A number of Indian fighting styles remain closely connected to yoga, dance and performing arts. Some of the choreographed sparring kalaripayat can be applied to dance and kathakali dancers who knew martial arts were believed to be markedly better than the other performers. Until recently the chhau dance was performed only by martial artists. Some traditional Indian dance schools skill incorporate kalaripayat as part of their exercise regimen.

Written evidence of martial arts in Southern India dates back to the Tamil sangam literature of about the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD. The Akananuru & Purananuru describe the use of spears, swords, shields, bows & silambam in the sangam era. The word kalari appears in the puram & Akam to describe both a battle field & combat arena. The word kalari tatt denoted a martial feat. Each warrior in the Sangam era. The word kalari appersin the Puram & akam to describe both a battle field & combt arena. The word kalari tatt denoted a martial feat. Each warrior in the Sangama era received regular military training in target practice & horse riding. They specialized in one or more of the important weapons of the period including the spear (vel), sword (val), shield (kedaiham),

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

& bow & arrow (vil ambu). The combat techniques of the Sangam period were the earlies precursors to kalaripayat. Reference to "Silappadikkaram" in Sangam literature date to the 2nd century.

Reference to fighting arts are found in early Buddhist texts, such as the Lotus sutra, which refers to a boxing art. It also categorized combat techniques as joint locks, fist strikes, grapples & throws. The Lotus sutra makes further mention of a martial art with dance – like movements called Nara. Another early Buddhist sutra called Hongya – Kyo describes a "strength contest" between Gautama Buddha's half – brother Prince Nanda & his cousin Devadatta.

Martial arts were not exclusive to the Kshatriya warrior caste, though they used the arts more extensively. The 8th century text Kuvalaymala by Udyotanasuri recorded martial arts being taught at salad & ghatika educational institutions, where Brahmin students from throughout the subcontinent (particularly from South India, Rajasthan & Bengal) were learning & practicing archery, fighting with sword & shield, with daggers, sticks, lances, & with fists & duels (niuddham).

The earliest extant manual of Indian martial arts is contained as chapters 248 to 251 in the Agni Purana (8 th – 11th century), giving an account of dhanurveda in a total of 104 shlokas. These verses describe how to improve a warrior's individual prowess & kill enemies using various different methods in warfare, Whether a warrior went to war in chariots, elephants, horse, or on foot. Foot methods were subdivided into armed combat & unarmed combat. The former included the bow & arrow, the sword, spear, noose, armour, iron dart, club, battle, axe, discus, & the trident. The latter included wrestling, knee strikes, & punching and kicking methods.

History of the Indian Martial Arts

Indian Martial Arts refers to the fighting systems of the Indian subcontinent in South Asia. This includes what are now India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, & sometimes Sri Lanka & Nepal. Although South Asian Martial Arts is occasionally preferred for neutrality, the fighting style of all the aforementioned countries are generally accepted as "Indian" due to shared history & culture. This article will refer to India in the historic sense to include most of southern Asia.

A variety of terms are used for the English phrases "Indian Martial Arts" or "South Asian Martial Arts" usually deriving from Snaskrit or Dravidian sources. While they may seem to imply specific disciplines (e.g.archery, armed combat), by Classical times they were used generically for all fighting systems.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Among the most common terms today, Sastra – Vidya, is a compound of the word Sastra (weapon) & Vidya (Knowledge) Dhanurveda derives from the words for bow (dhanushya) & knowledge (veda), the "Science of archery" in puranic literature, later applied to martial arts in general. The Vishnu Purana text describes dhanuveda as one of the traditional eighteen branches of applied knowledge or upaveda, along with shastrashastra or military science. A later term, Yuddha kala, comes from the words yuddha meaning fight or combat & Kala meaning art or skill. (lit weapon art) usually refers specifically to armed disciplines. Another term, Yuddha – Vidya or "combat Knowledge", refers to the skills used on the battlefield, encompassing not only actual fighting but also battle formations and strategy.

Shanurveda, a section found in the Vedas (1700BCE – 1100 BCE) contains references to martial arts. Indian epics contain the earliest accounts of combat, both armed & bare – handed. Most deities of the Hindu – Buddhaist pantheon are armed with their own personal weapon, & are revered not only as master martial artists but often as originators of those systems themselves. The Mahabharata tells of fighters armed only with daggers besting lions, & describes a prolonged battle between Arjuna & Karna using bows, sword, trees, rocks, & fists. Another unarmed battle in the Mahabharata describes two combatants boxing with clenched fists & fighting with kicks, finger strikes, knee strikes & headbutts.

The oldest recorded organized unarmed fighting art in South Asia is malla – yuddha or combat – wrestling, codified into four & Pre – dating the Indo – Aryan migrations. Stories describing Krishna report that he sometimes engaged in wrestling matches where he used knee strikes to the chest, punches to the head, hair pulling, & strangleholds. Based on such accounts, svinth (2002) traces press ups & squats used by South Asian wrestlers to the pre- classical era.

In Sanskrit literature the term dwandwyuddha referred to a duel, such that it was a battle between only two warriors & not armies. Epics often describe the duels between deities & god – like heroes as lasting a month or more . the malla – yuddha (wrestling match) between Bhima & Jarasandha lasts 27 days. Similarly, the dwandayuddha between Parasurama & Bhishma lasts for 30 days, while that between Krishna & Jambavan lasts for 28 days. Likewise, the dwandwayudda between Bali & Dundubhi, a demon in the form of a water buffalo, lasts for 45 days. The Manusmriti tells that if a warriors topknot come loose during such a fight or duel, the opponent must give him time to bind his hair before continuing.

The Charanavyuha authored by Shaunka mentions four upaveda (applied Veds). Included among them are archery (Dhanurved) & military sciences (shastrashastra), the mastery of which was the duty of the warrior class. Kings usually belonged to the kshatria (warrior) caste & thus served as heads of the army. They typically practiced archery, wrestling, boxing, & swordsmanship as part of their education. Examples include such rulers as Siddhartha Gautama & Rudradaman. The Chinese

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

monk Xuanzang writes that the emperor Harsha was light on his feet despite his advancing age & managed to dodge & seize an assailant durning an assassination attempt.

Many of the popular sports mentioned in the Vedas & the have their origins in military training, such as boxing (musti – yuddha), wrestling (maladwandwa), chariot – racing (rathachalan), horse – riding (aswa-rohana) & archery, competitions were held not just as a contest as a of the players' prowess but also as a means of finding a bridegroom. Arjuna, Rama & Siddhartha Gauthama all won their consorts in such tournaments.

In the 3rd century, elements from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, as well as finger movements in the nata dances, were incorporatedin into the fighting arts. A number of south Asian fighing style remain closely connected to yoga, dance & performing arts. Some of the choreographed sparring in kalaripayat can be applied to dance & kathakali dances who knew kalaripayat were believed to be markedly better than pther performers. Until recent decades, the chhau dance was performed only by martial artists. Some traditional Indian classical dance schools still incorporate martial arts as part of their exercise regimen.

Written evidence of martial arts in Southern India dates back to the Sangam literature of about the 2nd century BC to the 2nd Century AD. The word kalari appears in the Puram & akam to describe both a battle field & combat arena. The word kalari tatt denoted a martial feat, while kLri kozhai meant a coward in war. Each warrior in the sangam era received regular military training in target practice & horse riding. They specialized in one or more of the important weapons of the period including the spear, sword shield & bow & arrow. The combat techniques of the Sangam period were the earliest precursors to kalaripayat. References to ' Silappadikkaram' in Sangam period literature date back the 2nd century. This referred to the silamabam staff which was in great demand with foreign visitors.

The ten fighting style of northern style of norther sastra – vidya were said to have been created in different areas based on animals & gods, & designed for the particular geography of their origin. Tradition ascribes their convergence to the 6th – century Buddhist university of Takshashila, ancient India's intellectual capital. Located in present – day Panjab, Pakistan, the Ramayana ascribes the city's founding to Bharata who named it after his soon Taksha. From the 7th to the 5th centuries BC it was held in high regard as a great centre of trade & learning attracting student from throughout present – day Pakistan & northern India. Among the subject taught were the military science'. & archery was one of its prime arts.

Some measures were put into place to discourage martial activity during the Buddhist period. The khandhaka in particular forbids wrestling, boxing, archery, & swordsmanship. However, references to fighting arts are found in early Buddhist texts, such as the Lotus Sutra which refers to a boxing art

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

while speaking to Manjusri. It also categorized combt techniques as joint locks, fist strikes, grapples & throws. The Lotus Sutra makes further mention of a martial art with dance like movements called Nara. Another early Buddhist sutra called Hongya – kyo describes a " strength contest" between Gautama Buddha's half brother Prince Nanda & his cousin Devadatta. Siddhartha Gautama himself was a champion wrestler & swordsman before becoming the Buddha.

Classical period

Like other branches of Sanskrit literature, treatises on martial arts become more systematic in the course of the 1st millennium AD. Vajra-musti, an armed grappling style, is mentioned in sources of the early centuries AD. Around this time, tantric philosophers developed important metaphysical concepts such as kundalini, chakra, and mantra

The Sushruta Samhita identifies 107 vital points on the human body of which 64 were classified as being lethal if properly struck with a fist or stick.[9]Sushruta's work formed the basis of the medical discipline ayurveda which was taught alongside various martial arts.[9] With numerous other scattered references to vital points in Vedic and epic sources, it is certain that South Asia's early fighters knew and practised attacking or defending vital points.

Around 630, King Narasimhavarman of the Pallava dynasty commissioned dozens of granite sculptures showing unarmed fighters disarming armed opponents. This is similar to the style described in the Agni Purana.

Martial arts were not exclusive to the kshatriya caste, though the warrior class used them more extensively. The 8th-century text Kuvalaymala by Udyotanasuri recorded fighting techniques being taught at educational institutions, where non-kshatriya students from throughout the subcontinent "were learning and practicing archery, fighting with sword and shield, with daggers, sticks, lances, and with fists, and in duels (niyuddham)". Hindu priests of the traditional gurukula still teach unarmed fighting techniques to their students as a way of increasing stamina and training the physical body

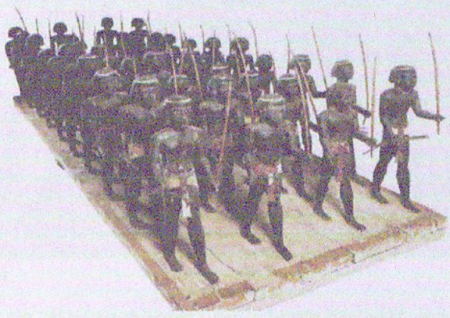
The Gurjara-Pratihara came into power during the 7th century and founded a kyshatria dynasty in northern India which exceeded the preceding Gupta Empire. During this period, Emperor Nagabhata I (750–780 AD) and Mihir Bhoja I (836–890) commissioned various texts on martial arts, and were themselves practitioners of these systems.Shiva Dhanuveda was composed in this era. The khadga, a two-handed broad-tipped heavy longsword, was given special preference. It was even used for khadga-puja, ritualised worship of the sword. The Gurjara-Pratiharas continuously fought off Arab invasions, particularly during the Battle of Rajasthan. The Arab chronicler Sulaiman wrote of the Gurjara ruler as the greatest foe to Islamic expansion, while at the same time praising his cavalry. The Gurjara people still keep up their tradition of gatka and kushti, and until today there are world-class wrestlers from the community competing at national and international levels.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Middle Ages (11th to 15th centuries)

Kalaripayat had developed into its present form by the 11th century, during an extended period of warfare between the Chera and Chola dynasties. The earliest treatise discussing the techniques of malla-yuddha is the Malla Purana unlike the earlier Manasollasa which gives the names of movements but no descriptions.

Over a period of several centuries, invading Muslim armies managed to occupy much of present-day Pakistan and northern India. In response to the spread of Muslim rule, the kingdoms of south India united in the 1300s to found the Vijayanagara Empire. Physical culture was given much attention by both royalty and commoners in the empire, with wrestling being particularly popular with both men and women. Gymnasiums have been discovered inside royal quarters of Vijayanagara, and records speak of regular physical training for commanders and their armies during peace time. Royal palaces and market places had special arenas where royalty and common people alike amused themselves by watching matches such as cock fights, ram fights and wrestling. One account describes an akhara in Chandragiri where noblemen practiced jumping exercises, boxing, fencing and wrestling almost everyday before dinner to maintain their health, and observed that "men as old as seventy years look only thirty"



The Italian traveller Pietro Della Valle wrote of cane-fighting in southern India. According to Pietro, it was the custom for soldiers to specialize in their own particular weapon of expertise and never use any other even during war, "thereby becoming very expert and well practiced in that which he takes to".

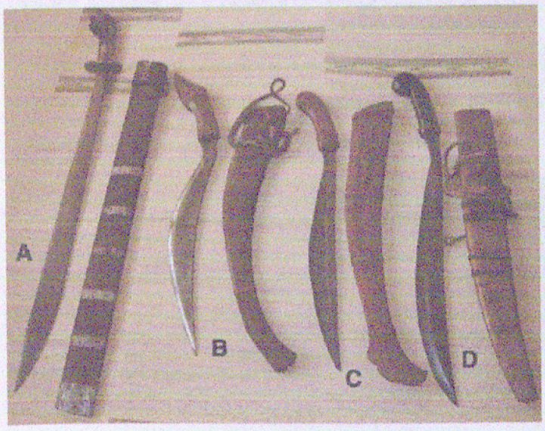
As their ancient predecessors, swordplay and wrestling were commonly practiced by the royalty of Vijayanagara. Krishna Deva Raya is said to have arranged a duel between a champion swordsman and the prince of Odisha who was known for being an expert with both the sword and dagger. The prince accepted the challenge until he learned he would be fighting one not of royal blood and so killed himself rather than having to "soil his hands". Fernao Nunes and the Persian envoy Adbur Razzak relate that Deva Raya II survived an assassination attempt "as he was a man who knew how to use both sword and dagger better than anyone in his kingdom, avoided by twists and turns of his body the thrusts aimed at him, freed himself from him, and slew him with a short sword that he had."

Mughal era (1526–1857)

After a series of victories, the Central. Asian conqueror Babur established Mughal rule in north India during the 16th century. The Mughals were patrons of India's native arts, not only recruiting

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

akhara-trained Rajput fighters for their armies but even practicing these systems themselves. The Ausanasa Dhanurveda Sankalanam dates to the late 16th century, compiled under the patronage of Akbar.[32] The Ain-i-Akbari tells that the Mughal court had various kinds of fighting men from around the empire who would demonstrate their skills every day in exchange for rewards. Among them were said to be both native and Mughal wrestlers, slingers from Gujarat, Hindustani athletes, boxers, stone-throwers and many others.



"There are several kinds of gladiators, each performing astonishing feats. In fighting they show much speed and agility and blend courage and skill in squatting down and rising up again. Some of them use shields in fighting, others use cudgels. Others again use no means of defence, and fight with one hand only; these are called ek-hath. Those who come from the eastern districts of Hindostan use a small shield called "chirwah". Those from the southern provinces have shields of such magnitude as to cover a man and a horse. This kind of shield is called tilwah. Another class use a shield somewhat less than the height of a man. Some again use a long sword, and seizing it with both hands they perform extraordinary feats of skill. There is another famous class called Bankúlis. They have no shield but make use of a peculiar kind of sword which, though curved towards the point, is straight near the handle. They wield it with great dexterity. The skill that they exhibit passes all description. Others are skilful in fighting with daggers and knives of various forms; of these there are upwards of a hundred thousand. Each class has a different name; they also differ in their performances. At court there are a thousand gladiators always in readiness."

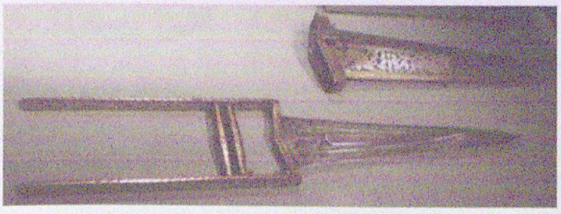
Avid hunters, a popular sport among the Mughals was shikar or tiger-hunting. While often done with arrows and later even rifles, it was considered most impressive to kill a tiger with a hand-to-hand weapon such as a sword or dagger. A warrior who managed to best a tiger would be awarded the title of Pachmar.

In the 16th century, Madhusudana Saraswati of Bengal organised a section of the Naga tradition of armed sannyasi in order to protect Hindus from the intolerant Mughal rulers. Although generally said to abide by the principle of non-violence, these Dashanami monks had long been forming akhara for the practice of both yoga and martial arts. Such warrior-ascetics have been recorded from 1500 to as late as the 18th century, although tradition attributes their creation to the 8th-century philosopher Sankaracharya. They began as a stratum of Rajput warriors who would gather after harvest and arm peasants into militarized units, effectively acting as a self-defense squad. Prevalent

in Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Bengal, they would give up their occupations and leave their families to live as mercenaries. Naga sadhu today rarely practice any form of fighting other than wrestling, but still carry trishula, swords, canes and spears. To this day their retreats are called chhauni or armed camps, and they have been known to hold mock jousts among themselves. As recently as the 1950s, it was not unusual for Naga sadhu to strike to kill someone over issues of honour.

Maratha dynasty (1674–1859)

Coming from a hilly region characterized by valleys and caves, the Marathas became expert horsemen who favoured light armour and highly mobile cavalry units during war. Known especially as masters of swords and spears, their heavily martial culture and propensity for the lance is mentioned as early as the 7th century by Xuanzang. After serving the Dakhin sultanates of the early 1600s, the scattered Marathas united to found their own kingdom under the warrior Shivaji Raje. Having learned the native art of mardani khela from a young age, Shivaji was a master swordsman and proficient in the use of various weapons. He took advantage of his people's expertise in guerilla tactics (Shiva sutra) to re-establish Hindavi Swarajya (native Hindu being a term traditionally applied to the native inhabitants of India throughout antiquity self-rule) at a time of Muslim supremacy and increasing intolerance. Utilizing speed, focused surprise attacks (typically at night and in rocky terrain), and the geography of Maharashtra, the Maratha rulers were successfully able to defend their territory from the more numerous and heavily armed Mughals. The still-existing Maratha Light Infantry is one of the "oldest and most renowned" regiments of the Indian Army, tracing its origins to 1768.



Paika Rebellion

Paika is the Odia word for fighter or warrior. Their training schools, known as paika akhada, can be traced back to ancient Kalinga and their art was at one time patronised by King Kharavela. In March 1817, under the leadership of Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra, nearly 400 Khanda of Ghumusar in Ganjam marched towards Khordhain protest against British colonial rule. Many government buildings were burnt down and all the officials fled. The British commander of one detachment was killed during a battle at Gangapada. The paika managed to capture two bases at Puri and Pipli before spreading the rebellion further to Gop, Tiran, Kanika and Kujang. The revolt lasted a year and a half before being quelled by September 1818. Today the paika akhada are known mainly for their street performances during festivals.

Modern period (1857 to present)

South Asian martial arts underwent a period of decline after the full establishment of British

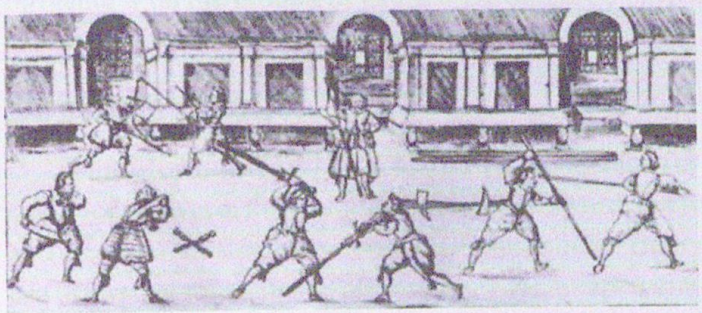
colonial rule in the 19th century. More European modes of organizing kings, armies and governmental institutions, and the increasing use of firearms, gradually eroded the need for traditional combat training associated with caste-specific duties. The British colonial government banned kalaripayat in 1804 in response to a series of revolts. Silambam was also banned and became more common in the Malay Peninsulathan its native Tamil Nadu. Nevertheless, traditional fighting systems persisted, sometimes even under the patronage of enthusiastic British spectators who tended to remark on the violence of native boxing and the acrobatic movements characteristic of South Asian fighting styles.

The British took advantage of communities with a heavily militaristic culture, characterising them as "martial races" and employing them in the armed forces. Sikhs - already known among Indians for their martial practices - were particularly valued by the colonists as soldiers and guards, and were posted throughout not only India but Southeast Asia and other parts of the British Empire. Members of the army were allowed to box as a way of settling disputes, provided that they were still able to carry out their duties as soldiers after a match. The particular form of boxing used by the Panjabi soldiers was loh-musti, as the kara worn by Sikhs could be wielded likebrass knuckles.

The resurgence of public interest in kalaripayat began in the 1920s in Tellicherry as part of a wave of rediscovery of the traditional arts throughout south India which characterised the growing reaction against British colonial rule. During the following three decades, other regional styles were subsequently revived such as silambam in Tamil Nadu, thang-ta in Manipur and paika akhada in Orissa.

Weapons

A wide array of weapons are used in South Asia, some of which are not found anywhere else. According to P.C. Chakravati in The Art of War in Ancient India, armies used standard weapons such as wooden or metal tipped spears, swords, thatched bamboo, wooden or metal shields, axes, short and long bows in warfare as early as the 4th century BC. Military accounts of the Gupta Empire (c. 240–480) and the later Agni Purana identify over 130 different weapons.



The Agni Purana divides weapons into thrown and unthrown classes. The thrown (mukta) class includes twelve weapons altogether which come under four categories, viz.

One of the earliest extant manual of Indian martial arts is in the Agni Purana (dated to between the 8th and the 11th century), The dhanurveda section in the Agni Purana spans chapters 248–251, categorizing weapons into thrown and unthrown classes and further divided into several sub-classes. It catalogs training into five major divisions for different types of warriors, namely charioteers, elephant-riders, horsemen, infantry, and wrestlers.

Then there follows a more detailed discussion of archery technique.

The section concludes with listing the names of actions or "deeds" possible with a number of weapons, including 32 positions to be taken with sword and shield (khagacarmavidhau), 11 names of techniques of using a rope in fighting, along with 5 names of "acts in the rope operation" along with lists of "deeds" pertaining to thechakram (war-quoit), the spear, the tomara (iron club), the gada (mace), the axe, the hammer, the bhindipla or laguda, the vajra, the dagger, the slingshot, and finally deeds with a bludgeon or cudgel. A short passage near the end of the text returns to the larger concerns of warfare and explains the various uses of war elephants and men. The text concludes with a description of how to appropriately send the well-trained fighter off to war.

The duel with bow and arrows is considered the most noble, fighting with the spear ranks next, while fighting with the sword is considered unrefined, and wrestling is classed as the meanest or worst form of fighting. Only a Brahmins could be an acharya (teacher) of sastravidya, Kshatriya and vaishya should learn from the Acharya, while a shudracould not take a teacher, left to "fight of his own in danger".

Over time, weaponry evolved and India became famous for its flexible wootz steel. The most commonly taught weapons in the Indian martial arts today are types of swords, daggers, spears, staves, cudgels and maces.

Weapons are linked to several superstitions and cultural beliefs in South Asia. Drawing a weapon without reason is forbidden and considered by Hindus to be disrespectful to the goddess Chandika. Thus the saying that a sword cannot be sheathed until it has drawn blood. It was a mother's duty to tie a warrior's sword around his waist before war or a duel. In addition, she would cut her finger with the sword and make a tilak on his head from a drop of her blood. Weapons themselves were also anointed with tilak, most often from the blood of a freshly-decapitated goat (chatanga). Other taboos include looking at one's reflection in the blade, telling the price or source of acquisition, throwing it on the ground or using it for domestic purposes.

Swordsmanship

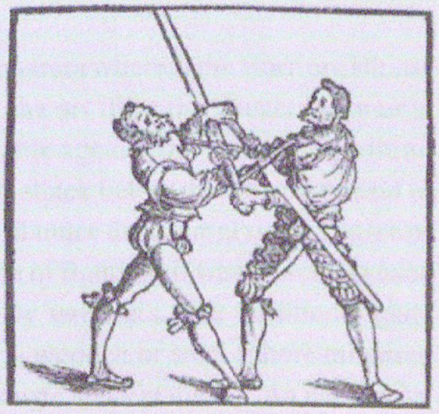
Sword-fighting is known in Sanskrit as assuyuddha or khadga-vidya. Varieties include the curved single-edge sword, the straight double-edge sword, the two-handed longsword, the gauntlet-sword, and the urumi or flexible sword. Techniques differ from one state to another but all make extensive use of circular movements, often circling the weapon around the user's head. The flexible nature and

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka

light weight of Indian swords allows for speed but provides little defensive ability, so that the swordsman must instead rely on body maneuvers to dodge attacks. Entire systems exist focusing on drawing the sword out of the opponent's body. Stances and forms traditionally made up the early training before students progress to free sparring with sticks to simulate swords in an exercise called gatka, although this term is more often used in English when referring to the Panjabi-Sikh fighting style. A common way to practice precision-cutting is to slice cloves or lemons, eventually doing so while blindfolded. Pairing two swords of equal length, though considered impractical in some parts of the world, is common and was considered highly advantageous in South Asia.

Staffplay

Stick-fighting (lathi khela) may be taught as part of a wider system like Gatka silambam or on its own. In the Kama Sutra the sage Vatsyayanaenjoins all women to practice fighting with single-stick, quarterstaff, sword and bow and arrow in addition to the art of love-making. The stick (lathi inPrakrit) is typically made of bamboo with steel caps at the ends to prevent it from splintering. Wooden sticks made from Indian ebony may also be used. It ranges from the length of a cudgel to a staff equal to the wielders height. The stick used during matches is covered in leather to cushion the impact. Points are awarded based on which part of the body is hit. Techniques differ from system to system, but northern styles tend to primarily use only one end of the staff for attacking while the other end is held with both hands.



Sikh martial art Gatka was developed in the North by sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib and it was further developed and preached by tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. Gatka is associated with the Sikhs history and an integral part of an array of Sikh Shastar Vidiya developed during 15th century for self-defense. Southern styles like also make use of this technique but will more often use both ends of the staff to strike. The latter is the more common method of attacking in the eastern states andBangladesh, combined with squatting and frequent changes in height.

Spearplay

The South Asian spear is typically made of bamboo with a steel blade. It can be used in hand-to-hand combat or thrown when the fighters are farther apart. Despite primarily being a thrusting weapon, the wide spearhead also allows for many slashing techniques. By the 1600s, Rajput mercenaries in the Mughal army were using a type of spear which integrated a pointed spear butt and a club near the head, making it similar to a mace. On the other hand, the longer cavalry spear was made of wood, with red cloth attached near the blade to prevent the opponent's blood from dripping to the shaft. The Marathas were revered for their skill of wielding a ten-foot spear called bothati from horseback. Bothati fighting is practiced with a ball-tipped lance, the end of which is covered in

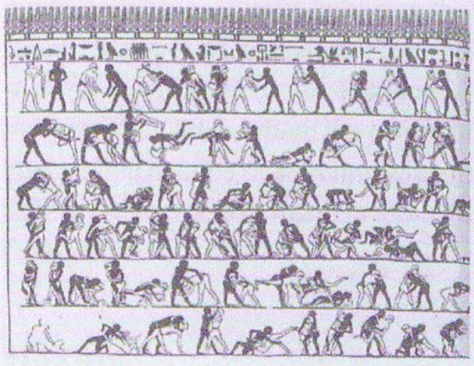
dye so that hits may easily be confirmed. In solo training, the spear is aimed at a pile of stones. From this was eventually developed the uniquely Indian vita which has a five-foot length of cord attached to the butt end of the weapon and tied around the spearman's wrist. Using this cord the spear can be pulled back after it has been thrown.

Archery

Archery (dhanurvidya) is noted to be one of the noblest form of defense within Indian cultural heritage. Siddharta Gautama was a champion with the bow, while Rama, Arjuna,Karna, Bhishma and Drona of the epics were all said to be peerless archers. Traditional archery is today practiced mainly in the far northern states of Ladakh and Arunachal. One sport which has persisted into the present day is thoda from Himachal Pradesh, in which a team of archers attempt to shoot blunt arrows at the legs of the opposing team.

Mace-fighting

Mace combat (gada-yuddha) is first mentioned in the Mahabharata wherein the warriors Bhima and Duryodhana learn the art from the master Balarama. Bhima wins the final battle against Duryodhana by hitting his inner thigh. Such an attack below the waist was said to be against the etiquette of mace duels, implying a degree of commonality to this type of fighting. It was and still is used as training equipment by wrestlers. The traditional gada (mace) was essentially a wooden or steel sphere mounted on a handle and with a single spike at the top. An alternative mace-head was the lotus-shaped padam. According to the Agni Purana, the gada can be handled in twenty different ways. Due to its weight, the gada is said to be best suited to fighters with a large build or great strength. The Mughal club or mace, known as a gurj or gargaj, had a head consisting of 8-10 petal-shaped blades. Fitted with basket-hilt, a spherical pommel, and a spiked top, this type of club was designed for beating down armour-clad opponents. Alternatively, some gurj had a spiked top and a hand-guard.



Systems

As in other respects of Indian culture, South Asian martial arts can be roughly divided into northern and southern styles. The northern systems (includin Pakistan and Bangladesh) may generically be referred to as shastra-vidiya, although this term is often used synonymously with gatka. The main difference is that the north was more exposed to Persianate influence during the Mughal period, while the south is more conservative in preserving ancient and medieval traditions. The exception to this rule are the northeastern states which, due to their geographic location, were closed off from

most pre-European foreign invaders. As a result, northeast Indian culture and fighting methods are also closely related to that of Southeast Asia. In addition to the major division between north and south, martial systems in South Asia tend to be associated with certain states, cities, villages or ethnic groups.

Wrestling

Grappling arts (malla-vidya), practiced either as sport or fighting style, are found throughout the entirety of South Asia. True combat-wrestling is called malla-yuddha, while the term malakhra refers to wrestling for sport. Malla-yuddha was codified into four forms which progressed from purely sportive contests of strength to actual full-contact fights known as yuddha. Due to the extreme violence, this final form is generally no longer practised. The second form, wherein the wrestlers attempt to lift each other off the ground for three seconds, persists in Karnataka. Under Mughal influence, malla-yuddha incorporated new training methods and became known as kusti, which soon came to dominate most of South Asia. Traditional malla-yuddha is virtually extinct in the north where it has been supplanted by kusti, but another form called malakhra still exists in parts of India and Sindh, Pakistan. Vajra-mustiwas another old grappling art in which the competitors wrestled while wearing a horned knuckleduster. In a later style called naki ka kusti (claw wrestling), the duellists fought with bagh nakha. Numerous styles of folk wrestling are also found in India's countryside, such as mukna from Manipur and Inbuan wrestling from Mizoram.

Boxing

Boxing (musti-yuddha) is traditionally considered the roughest form of South Asian unarmed combat. In ancient times it was popular throughout what are now Pakistan and northern India, but is rarely practiced today. Boxers harden their fists by striking stone and other hard objects. Matches may be either one-on-one or group fights. All kinds of strikes and grabs are allowed, and any part of the body may be targeted except the groin. Another form of boxing was loh-musti (meaning "iron fist"), said to have been practiced by the God Krishna. In this variation, boxers fought while wielding a kara or steel bracelet like a knuckleduster. Grabs, kicks, biting and attacks to the groin were all legal, the only prohibition being spitting on the opponent which was considered crude and dishonourable. The kara used for regular matches was unadorned, but the form employed during war had one or more spikes around its edge. The kara may be paired with one on each hand, but it was generally only worn on one hand so the other hand could be left free. In some cases the free hand could be paired with another weapon, most commonly the bagh nakha.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Kicking

Kick-fighting (aki kiti) is the preserve of tribes from Nagaland. While the entire Naga population of northeast India and northwest Myanmar was traditionally known for their skill with broadswords (dao) and other weapons, disputes among tribesmen and between tribes were settled with a solely kick-based form of unarmed fighting. The goal is to either drive the opponent to their knees or outside of the ring. Only the feet are used to strike, and even blocking must be done with the legs.

Pugilism

Many forms of unarmed combat (bahu-yuddha or bhuja-yuddha) incorporate too wide an array of techniques to be accurately categorized. In modern times when the carrying of weapons is no longer legal, teachers of the martial arts often emphasize the unarmed techniques as these are seen to be more practical for self-defense purposes. A warrior who fights unarmed is referred to as a bhajanh, literally meaning someone who fights with their arms. The bare-handed components of Indian fighting arts are typically based on the movements of animals or Hindu deities. Binot, a Central Indian art which focuses on defending against both armed and unarmed opponents, may be the earliest system of its kind. In the Mughal era, such fighters were known as ek-hath (lit. "one-hand"), so named because they would demonstrate their art using only one arm.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Kerala- Kalari Payattu

The Keralan art of fighting came into its present form through the kalari, the local variation of the gurukula educational institution. Today there are three branches ofkalaripayat: northern, central and southern. Training progresses from footwork and stances to unarmed techniques, blunt weapons, and finally to edged weapons. The most common weapons today are the staff, stick, sword, shield, spear, dagger and flexible sword.

Kalari is the Malayalam (language spoken in Kerala) word, for a special kind of gymnasium, where the martial art known as Kalari Payattu, is practiced. It had its origins in the 4th century A. D. Legends claim, that the art began with the sage Parasurama, who possessed mystical powers. He built temples and also introduced martial arts, which have influenced and shaped many other arts. The art reached its zenith in the 16th century, in the days of Thacholi Othenan - a celebrated chieftain of north Malabar.

A Kalari Payattu demonstration includes physical exercises and mock duels - armed and unarmed combat. It is not accompanied by any music or drumming, but is a silent combat, where style matters the most. Kalari Payattu is practiced by women also. Unniyarcha was a legendary heroine, who won many battles with distinction. Today, Kalari Payattu is a method of physical fitness, and an empty-handed means of self-defence. Yet, it is tied to traditional ceremonies and rituals.

Kalari Payattu consists of various techniques and stages. Among them are:.

Uzhichil

Uzhichil, or the massage with the Gingli oil, is used for imparting suppleness to the body, but only persons with a thorough knowledge of the nervous system, and the human body, conduct the 'uzhichil'.

Maipayattu

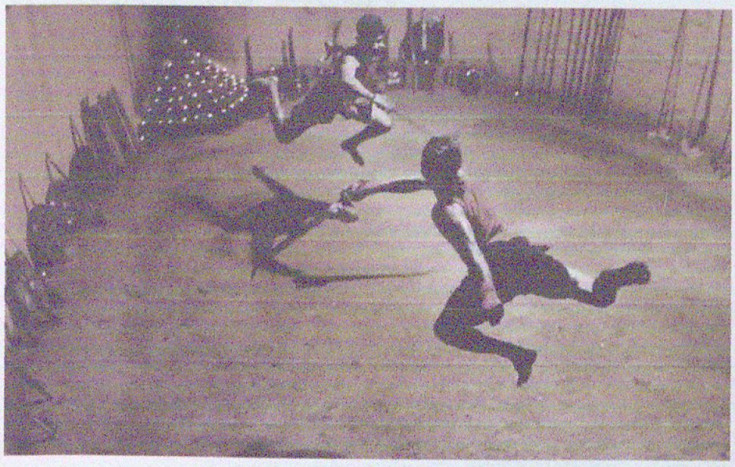
HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Body exercises or Maippayattu includes the twists and turns of the body, leaps and jumps, and poses, designed to gain control over various parts of the human body.

Sticks of Kolthari

This is the next stage where training in handling various staves of wood or canes of different lengths are imparted. The long stick is *kettukari* and the short one,*kuruvadi.*

Otta - a Weapon for the 'coup de grace'



The *otta* is an 'S' shaped staff, with a knob at one end, made of the toughest portions of the tamarind tree.These sticks, which are about 2 feet long, are specially suitable for attacks on the nervous system.

Metal weapons or Anga Thari

Weapons of various metals are used in training and combat sessions, like the sword, sword and shield, two types of knives, daggers, the spear and the 'urumi'. Various exercises are performed with these weapons.

Puliyankam (Sword Fight)

Wielding the sword in an efficient manner, is considered to be the peak of perfection in Kalari Payattu. Various methods in the use of the sword, as a weapon of offence and defence, are being practiced today, but the most awe-inspiring of these, is the Puliyankam, where the combatants fight like tigers, propelled by powerful fuels - extraordinary elan and agility.

The Spear Vs the Sword

In this combat, one contestant is armed with a sword and shield, and the other with a spear. Due to the length of the spear, the swordsman faces a disadvantage, but if he knows how to exploit all the weak points of the spear-man, and take advantage of all the opportunities, that come his way to get under his opponent's guard, he can easily triumph over his opponent.

HA[illegible]HU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Barehanded Fight or Verumkai

In unguarded moments, there are some special ways of getting out of a tight situation, by using one's hands or a piece of cloth or a rope. Locks and blows are in vogue. Attacks on the nervous system by the edge of one's palm, are enough to paralyse the opponent. Various types of blows with different effects are, therefore, practiced to perfection.

Character, fitness and sheer courage - these are the demands of Kalari Payattu, which has about it a distinct spiritual and mythical aura. To succeed in this martial art, one needs plenty of fire in the belly, energy, drive and fierce commitment.

Kalaripayattu History

Kalaripayattu :- is a Martial art which originated as a style in Keral, during the early 13th Century AD. It is considered to be one of the oldest fighting system in existence. It is now practiced in Kerala, in contiguous parts of Tamil Nadu. It was originally practiced in northern & central parts of Kerala & the Tulunadu region of Karnataka.

Kalaripayattu includes strikes, kicks, grappling preset forms, weaponry & healing methods. Regional variants are classified according to geographical position in Kerala, these are the Northern style from Malabara region in north Kerala, the Central style from inner Kerala, the primarily by the pada Nairs, a sub group of Nairs & by 'chekavas' a sub group of Ezhavas. The famous vadakkan pattukal or the pada northern ballads contains the stories of these medieval kalari warriors. These ballads are divided into two group of Ezhavas. Which tells the story of the Nair Thacholi family & the 'puthooram Pattukal', which tells the story of Ezhavas puthooram family. The South ern style, was practiced largely by the Nadars & has features distinguishing if from its other regional counterparts. Northern Kalaripayattu is based on elegant & flexible movements evasion, jumps & weapons training, while the southern ' Adi Murai" style primarily follows the hard impact based techniques with priority on empty hand fighting & pressure point strikes. Both systems make use of internal & external concepts.

Some of the flexibility training methods in northern Kalaripayattu are applied in Keralan dance forms and Kathakali dancers who knew martial artswere believed to be markedly better than the other performers. Some traditional Indiandance schools still incorporate kalaripayattu as part of their exercise regimen.

Kalaripayattu is a battlefield art belived to be derived from lord Parasurama who Started 108 Kalari in Kerala.

Kalaripayattu was first documented around the 13th or 14th century AD. Chekavars are pioneers of kalari.

The art was disseminated through schools known as kalari, which served as centres of learning before the modern educational system was introduced. Still in existence, kalaris served as meeting places for the acquisition of knowledge on various subjects ranging from mathematics, language, astronomy and various theatrical arts. More specifically, martial arts were taught in the payattu kalari, meaning fight school.

Kalaripayattu become more developed during the 9th century & was practiced by warrior clans of Kerala to defend the state & & king. In the 11th & 12th century, Keral was divided into small principalities ruled by nair chieftains that fought wars among themselves. In such wars, one – on-one duels or ankam were fought by chieftains that fought by Chekavar on an ankathattu, a temporary platform, four to six feet high. Ever since the premedieval era, Kaniyar, the traditional astrologer caste men of Kerala, particularly from northern region, were assigned as the preceptors of Kalaripayattu, hence, till the last century, they were known as Panickar & Asans in northern & southern regions of the sate, respectively. Many of their families still maintain what remains of their old kalaris, as heritage.

The Mappila Muslims adopted and practiced Kalaripayattu as their own. The ballads of North Kerala refer to Muslims trained in Kalaripayattu. For instance, the hero of the northern ballads Thacholi Othenan (Manikoth Thacholi Udayanakurup) bowed before Kunjali Marakkar, the Muslimcommander of the Zamorin, and offered him presents before opening his kalari. The traitor who killed Thacholi Othenan was also a Mappila discipline of Mathilur Gurukkal. Some Mappilas were trained in Hinduinstitutions known as Chekor Kalaris. TheParicha Kali is an adaptation of Kalaripayattu, and the Mappila tradition of this art is called Parichamuttu.

It is mentioned that some panikkars had between 8,000 to 9,000 disciples, who were trained as fighting forces for the local rajahs. One of the most prominent Ezhavapanikkars was Arattupuzha Velayudha Panikkar, whose kalari was located at Alappuzha.

Decline and revival

Kalaripayattu underwent a period of decline when Velu Thampi Dalawa reduced the allowances of Nair warriors in the Thiruvitankoor army in the 1800s. These soldiers indeed joined British army

and went on and killed Velu Thampi Dalawa. TheBritish eventually banned Nairs from practicing kalaripayattu and the Nair custom of holding swords, so as to prevent rebellion and anti-colonial sentiments.

The resurgence of public interest in kalaripayattu began in the 1920s inThalassery, as part of a wave of rediscovery of the traditional arts throughout south India and continued through the 1970s surge of general worldwide interest in martial arts. In recent years, efforts have been made to further popularise the art, with it featuring in international and Indian films such as Ondanondu Kaladalli (Kannada), Indian(1996), Asoka (2001), The Myth (2005), The Last Legion (2007) and Commando (2013).

Styles

Kalaripayattu has three regional variants that are distinguished by their attacking and defensive patterns.

Northern kalaripayattu

Northern kalaripayattu (vadakkan kalari) is practised mainly in North Malabar. It places more emphasis on weapons than on empty hands. Parashurama, sixth avatar of Vishnu, is believed to be the style's founder according to both oral and written tradition. Masters in this system are usually known asgurukkal or occasionally as asan, and were often given honorific titles, especiallyPanikkar. The northern Brahmin immigrants contributed their skills through the "Salai"s which were educational institutions imparting various branches of knowledge including military arts.

The northern style is distinguished by its meippayattu - physical training and use of full-body oil massage. The system of treatment and massage, and the assumptions about practice are closely associated with Ayurveda. The purpose of medicinal oil massage is to increase the practitioners' flexibility, to treat muscle injuries incurred during practice, or when a patient has problems related to the bone tissue, the muscles, or nerve system. The term for such massages is thirumal and the massage specifically for physical flexibility Chavutti Thirumal which literally means "stamping massage" or "foot massage". The masseuse may use their feet and body weight to massage the person.

There are several lineages/styles (sampradayam), of which 'thulunadan' is considered as the

best. In olden times, students went to Tulunadu kalari's to overcome their defects (kuttam theerkkal). There are schools which teach more than one of these traditions. Some traditional kalari around Kannur for example teach a blend of arappukai, pillatanni, andkatadanath styles.

Southern kalaripayattu

Varma Kalai of Tamil Nadu is classified as Southern Kalaripayattu in South Kerala. The Southern Kalari masters are known asasaan. The stages of training are chuvatu (soloforms), jodi (partner training/sparring),kurunthadi (shortstick), neduvadi (longstick), katthi (knife), katar (dagger), valum parichayum (sword and shield), chuttuval(flexible sword), double sword, kalari grappling and marma (pressure points). The southern style, was practiced largely by the Nadars and has features distinguishing it from its other regional counterparts.

Zarrilli refers to southern kalaripayattu asvarma ati (the law of hitting), marma ati(hitting the vital spots) or varma kalai (art of varma). The preliminary empty handed techniques of varma ati are known asadithada (hit/defend). Marma ati refers specifically to the application of these techniques to vital spots. Weapons includebamboo staves, short sticks, and the double deer horns.

Medical treatment in the southern styles is identified with siddha, the traditionalDravidian system of medicine distinct from north Indian ayurveda. The Siddha medical system, otherwise known as siddha vaidyam, is also attributed to Agastya.

Central kalaripayattu

The Madhya Kalari (central style) of kalaripayattu is practiced mainly in the Northern parts of Kerala. Its diverse distinctive techniques, with heavy emphasis on application, are performed within floor paths known as kalam. The Madhya(central) Kalari has many different styles which place heavy emphasis on lower body strength and speed through thorough practice of various chuvadu, only after which participants advance into weaponry and advanced studies.

Techniques

Kalaripayattu techniques are a combination of steps (Chuvatu) and postures (Vadivu). Chuvatu literally means 'steps', the basic steps of the martial arts. Vadivu literally means 'postures' or stances are the basic characteristics of Kalaripayattu training. Named after animals, they are usually eight in number. Styles differ considerably from one tradition to another. Not only do the names of poses differ, the masters also differ about application and interpretation. Each stance has its own style, power combination, function and effectiveness. These techniques vary from one style to another.

The Kalari Payatu festival & Origin

A kalari is the school or training hall where martial arts are taught. They were originally constructed according to vastu sastra with the entrance facing east and the main door situated on the centre-right. Sciences likemantra saastra tantrasaastra and marma saastra are utilized to balance the space's energy level. The training area comprises a puttara (seven tiered platform) in the south-western corner. The guardian deity (usually anavatar of Bhagavathi, Kali or Shiva) is located here, and is worshiped with flowers, incense and water before each training session which is preceded by a prayer. Northern styles are practiced in special roofed pits where the floor is 3.5 feet below the ground level and made of wet red clay meant to give a cushioning effect and prevent injury. The depth of the floor protects the practitioner from winds that could hamper body temperature. Southern styles are usually practiced in the open air or in an unroofed enclosure of palm branches.[9] Traditionally, when a kalari was closed down it would be made into a small shrine dedicated to the guardian deity.

Marmashastram & Massage

It is claimed that learned warriors can disable or kill their opponents by merely touching the correct marmam (vital point). This is taught only to the most promising and level-headed persons, to discourage misuse of the technique. Marmashastram stresses on the knowledge of marmam and is also used for marma treatment (marmachikitsa). This system of marma treatment comes undersiddha vaidhyam, attributed to the sage Agastya and his disciples. Critics of kalaripayattu have pointed out that the application of marmam techniques against neutral outsiders has not always produced verifiable results. The earliest mention of marmam is found in the Rig Veda whereIndra is said to have defeated Vritra by attacking his marman with a vajra. References to marman also found in theAtharva Veda. With numerous other scattered references to vital points in Vedic and epic sources, it is certain that India's early martial artists knew about and practiced attacking or defending vital points. Sushruta identified and defined 107 vital points of the human body in his Sushruta Samhita. Of these 107 points, 64 were classified as being lethal if properly struck with a fist or stick. Sushruta's work formed the basis of the medical discipline ayurveda, which was taught alongside various Indian martial artsthat had an emphasis on vital points, such as varma kalai and marma adi.

As a result of learning about the human body, Indian martial artists became knowledgeable in the field of traditional medicine and massage. Kalaripayattu teachers often provide massages (uzhichil) with medicinal oils to their students in order to increase their physical flexibility or to treat muscle injuries encountered during practice. Such massages are generally termedthirumal and the unique massage given to increase flexibility is known as katcha thirumal. It is said to be as sophisticated as the uzhichil treatment of ayurveda. Kalaripayattu has borrowed extensively from Ayurveda and equally lends to it.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Weapons

Although no longer used in sparring sessions, weapons are an important part of kalaripayattu. This is especially true for the northern styles which are mostly weapon-based. Some of the weapons mentioned in medieval Sangam literature have fallen into disuse over time and are rarely taught in kalaripayattu today.

Parashurama

Existence of Martial arts in India for over 3000 years can be proved by the mention of martial arts in the Vedas. According to ancient folklore, Lord Vishnu's disciple Parasurama who was an avatar of Lord Vishnu is believed to be the founder of martial arts in India. Kalaripayattu, which is the most popular amongst many martial arts practiced in India, is believed to have been founded by Parasurama. Kalaripayattu is probably the oldest form of martial arts in India. The word kalaripayattu is a combination of two words, namely, 'kalari' and 'payattu' which mean training ground and fight. Kalaripayattu is an ancient art form and is considered to be one of the oldest forms of martial art in Indian and across the world. During the peak of its popularity, kalaripayattu was used as a code of combat by the South Indian dynasties. Kalaripayattu reach its zenith during the hundred years of war between the Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras. The constant fighting between the princely states helped the fighters in refining the art into a martial art form.

Many martial arts in India have been forgotten due to neglect and lack of proper documentation of their existence but kalaripayattu has stood the test of time. During the 13th and 16th centuries, the art gained dominance and was incorporated into many religions as well. It was customary in Kerala to have all children above the age of seven to obtain training in kalaripayattu. Martial arts in India were considered as a code of life for many. However, during the British occupation, martial arts in India suffered major set backs. The ruling British objected to the tradition of training with and carrying arms. Laws were passed and were implemented with zest to prevent the people from practicing and training in kalaripayattu. These laws were put in place by the British to quell the chances of any form of mutiny or rebellion among the natives. But the British had underestimated the love of martial arts in India and kalaripayattu was secretly practiced and kept alive during the colonial occupation of India by the British. The art was practiced by people in rural areas to avoid an confrontation with the authorities. Thus, one of the main martial arts of India survived the dark times where curbs were imposed on its practices. On being declared independent, martial arts in India were in vogue again as they could now be practiced without hesitation. Lost glory of kalaripayattu was regained slowly and steadily. Many movements and postures in the art of kalaripayattu are believed to be inspired by the raw strength of animals and are also named after them. There is a strong belief that this art was developed in the forests when hunters had observed the fighting techniques of different animals.

Kalaripayattu means Practicing the arts of the battlefield. Kalari means battlefield. Kalaripayattu is sometimes in short called as Kalari. It is today more prevalent in the south Indian state of Kerala.

This art is said to have had its origin with Rishi Agastya and Parashurama. Agastya is a great name in Ayurveda – the main Indian medical system. Parashurama is also said to have reclaimed the submerged Kerala from the Arabian Sea (Will write on this aspect of Kerala some day) The oldest reference to this martial art is found in the Rigveda and Atharvaveda. In Rigveda it is mentioned that lord Indra defeated the daemon Vritasura using one of the marmam techniques of Kalari. Marmam are pressure points in the human body and experienced practitioners can disable or kill their opponents by a mere touch of the opponent's Marmam. This technique is taught only to the promising and level headed persons, to prevent its misuse.

Today martial arts in India are back in focus. Kalaripayattu is now practiced widely across Kerala, fringes of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and also in Sri Lanka. Kalaripayattu is also a source of living for many people in Kerala as performances are now conducted for tourists. Kalaripayattu has been stood the test of time unlike many other martial arts in India. Historically, kalaripayattu has proven to be one of the most ancient martial arts in India and is still being practiced by many in Southern India.

Shiva was said to have taught Parasurama, the art of Kalaripayattu, which arised itself out of Shiva's war with his Father-In-Law Daksha, one of the Prajapatis or 'Lords Of Creation'. Later, Parasurama taught his 21 disciples the art of Kalaripayattu, and then opened 108 Kalari (school's/ gymnasiums) around the Kerala region, Southern Indian state.

There are no records that chronicle the historical origins of Kalaripayattu, only narrative accounts formatted as myth and legend. Most of these credit Kalari's origins to Lord Shiva, one of the three principle Gods of the Hindu pantheon. Shiva has many aspects, he is depicted as moral and paternal, also called, the Lord of Time(mahakala), the 'Destroyer' of all things. He is the Yogeshwara who dwells in Kailas, deep in the meditation that maintains this very existence.

Kalari and Tibetan Martial Arts:

The Tibetan Lion's Roar! Lama, Potala Palace Martial Art: the martial art of the Tibetan Nation and People; is a Tantric Yana in its own right. The art becomes known to narrative history in the middle of the 15th century AD, when the Lama Ah-Dat-Tor, a Tantric Siddha (Crazy Wisdom Teacher), and student of Dharma Master Gong-Got Lama, at the Potala's famous: Namgyal or "Victorious" Monastery, 'created' the Lion's Roar! martial art through a Tantric meditative and Yiddam (Deity Meditation) process, making Lion's Roar Lama Potala Palace Kung-Fu, part of the Gelugpa or "Yellow Hat" school of Tibetan Buddhism, a part of the lineage sect of the Dalai Lama himself.This is as far as the oral narrative histories, can take us. However, broader anthropological research can offer the potential for further insight.The 'Potala': Early legends concerning the Red Mountain at Lhasa, tell of a sacred cave, considered to be the dwelling place of the Bodhisattva Chenrezig that was used as a meditation retreat by Emperor Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century AD. In 637 King Songtsen Gampo built a palace on the 'Red Hill/Mountain' at Lhasa. From as early as the eleventh century the Palace was called Potala. The name probably derives from Mt. Potala (Sanskrit: Potalaka - derived from the Tamil for 'Brilliance' or 'To Light a Fire') the mythological mountain

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

abode of the Bodhisattva Chenrezig (Indian - 'Avilokiteshvara', Han- 'Kuan Yin') in the Kerala region of Southern India. The Potalaka is sacred to Hindu's, Jains and Buddhists. The Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo has been regarded as an incarnation of Chenrezig (as indeed were all the subsequent incarnations of the Dalai Lama). As he founded the Potala, it seems likely that the Mountain top Palace of Lhasa took on the name of the Indian sacred mountain.

Given this, and given that The Lion's Roar (as part of the Lotus Sutra) was originally a Theravada Arhat teaching, it seems likely that very early Bcuddhist influence (Theravadian) may well have entered into Tibet, and settled near to the Potala Mountain. The Lion's Roar! Tibetan martial art, is acknowledged to have been influenced by the Indian martial art of Kalaripyattu. Some narrative histories make direct claim that Ah-Dat-Tor was trained in Kalari, and, some martial arts forms from the 'Southern' style of Kalaripayattu, from the Kerala district, are very close indeed in technique and sequence to modern Lion's Roar forms, even without any evidence whatsoever of any recent historical contact between the systems. This fact was recorded in a BBC Television film documentary in 1981: "Kalari, the Indian way" which shows a Southern Kalari Master performing a martial arts form near identical to one found in a branch lineage from the Chan-Tat-Fu line of Tibetan Hap-Gar Kung-Fu. Given that the Sacred Mountain of Potala is in Southern India, a potential link to Southern Kalari martial arts is obviously evident (see above).

Given also that Gong-Got Lama (Dharma Master) was also a teacher of martial arts at the Potala to Ah-Dat-Tor Lama, it may well be that Southern Indian Kalaripayattu together with its sister art Simhanada Vajramukti, was already present at Lhasa, and taught on the Potala Red-Hill for many generations before 'Lion's Roar' as we know it (exclusively through Han Chinese lineages) was 'formulated' by Ah-Dat-Tor himself.

The transformation of the Arhat (Theravadian) tradition into the Mahayana Bodhisattva, may mirror the transformation of Indian Kalaripayattu into Tibetan Lion's Roar Lama 'Kung-Fu'. Named Arhat forms still exist in some extant Han 'Tibetan' Hop-Gar, Lama and White Crane Kung-Fu lineages, that all arise from the original Lion's Roar of Ah-Dat-Tor. Bodhisattva forms also exist, showing the mixture of traditions. Indeed some Tibetan lineages in Hop-Gar claim that their Tantra is from the Karmapa 'Black-Hat' tradition, which cannot be the case if Ah-Dat-Tor was a Monk at the Potala, unless, further influence occurred after Ah-Dat-Tor's time, which seems to be the case.

Nevertheless, Ah-Dat-Tor's art, as originated by him, or as 'ascribed to him', albeit arising from a Kalari root, has further diversified into many branches. To be authentically 'Tibetan' however, the Lion's Roar! Lama 'Kung-Fu' MUST be Tantric in form and practice, this is the essential root, and must be 'living' even in the Han-diversified or Westernized branches of the art. To be practiced as Tantra, TRUE Lion's Roar! Martial Arts will resemble Japanese 'Zen' martial systems, even more than they do Han Chinese, in respect of their integrated spiritual - Buddhist practices. Just as Karate-Do is the way of the 'Empty' (Zen) Hand, so too is Lion's Roar 'Tantra', in it's integrated body, mind, and spiritual form.

Buddhism has always changed to meet 'local' conditions, in host cultures: Tibet, Thailand, Japan, China, the West etc (e.g. 'Gnostic Buddhism'). Lion's Roar! as a Tantric martial art has also changed and evolved, but, as with Buddhism, and in particular, as with 'Tibetan' Buddhism, the art must have

HA[illegible]CHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

a Tantric core. Then, the Lion's Roar Will still Roar the Buddha's Dharma, and still be a vehicle for transformation and enlightenment, just as it was always intended to be.

'Tibetan' Kung-Fu has been demonstrated to be related in religion to India thru Tantric Buddhism, and now thru actual research the physical connections in technique and form can be seen as still alive, and still flourishing in Kerala, Southern India, the 'homeland' of Kalari, which is perhaps the 'Mother Art' for both Tibetan and Han Chinese 'Kung-Fu'.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Silambam

Silambam is a weapon-based Indian martial art from Tamil Nadu, but also traditionally practised by the Tamil community of Sri Lanka and Malaysia. It is closely related to Keralan kalaripayat and Sri Lankan angampora. It derives from the Tamil word silammeaning "hill" and the Kannada word bambu from which the English "bamboo" originates. The term silambambu referred to a particular type of bamboo from the Kurinji hills in present-day Kerala. Thus silambam was named after its primary weapon, the bamboo staff. The related term silambattam often refers specifically to stick-fighting.

There are numerous styles of silambam but the nillaikalakki discipline (from nillai meaning posture and kalakki meaning to disturb or shuffle) is the most widespread style outside India, and is most well known in Malaysia. The styles differ from one another in grip, posture, foot work, length of the stick, etc. Silambam may either be practiced for the purpose of combat or purely for demonstration Masters are called asaan while grandmasters are addressed as periyasaan iyan or annaavi.

Oral folklore traces silambam back several thousand years to the siddhar (enlightened sage) Agastya. While on his way to Vellimalai, Agastya discussed Hindu philosophy with an old man he met, said to be the god Murugan in disguise. The old man taught him ofkundalini yoga and how to focus prana through the body's nadi (channels). Agastya practiced this method of meditation and eventually compiled three texts on palm leaves based on the god's teachings. One of these texts was the Kampu Sutra (Staff Classic) which was said to record advanced fighting theories in verse. These poems and the art they described were allegedly passed on to other siddha of the Agastmuni akhara (Agastya school) and eventually formed the basis of silambam, siddha medicine, and the southern style of kalaripayat.

References in the Silappadikkaram and other works of Sangam literature shows that silambam has been practiced as far back as the 2nd century BC. The bamboo staff - along with swords, pearls and armor - was in great demand with foreign traders, particularly those from Southeast Asia where silambam greatly influenced many fighting systems. The Indian community of the Malay Peninsulais known to have practiced silambam as far back as the period of Melaka's founding in the 1400s, and likely much earlier.

The soldiers of Kings Puli Thevar, Veerapandiya Kattabomman and Maruthu Pandiyar (1760–1799) relied mainly on their silambam prowess in their warfare against the British Army. Indian

martial arts suffered a decline after the British colonists banned silambam along with various other systems. They also introduced modern western military training which favoured fire-arms over traditional weaponry. During this time, silambam became more common in Southeast Asia than its native India where it was banned by the British rulers. The ban was lifted after India achieved independence. Today, silambam is the most famous and widely practicedIndian martial art in Malaysia where demonstrations are held for cultural shows.

Weapons - Kattari

Silambam's main focus is on the bamboo staff. The length of the staff depends on the height of the practitioner. Ideally it should just touch the forehead about three fingers from the head, typically measuring around 1.68 metres (five and a half feet). Different lengths may be used depending on the situation. For instance, the sedikuchi or 3-foot stick can be easily concealed. Separate practice is needed for staffs of different lengths. Listed below are some of the weapons used in silambam.

- Silambam: staff, preferably made from bamboo, but sometimes also from teak or Indian rose chestnut wood. The staff is immersed in water and strengthened by beating it on the surface of still or running water. It is often tipped with metal rings to prevent the ends from being damaged.
- Maru: a thrusting weapon made from deer horns
- Aruval: sickle, often paired
- Panthukol: staff with balls of fire or weighted chains on each end
- Savuku: whip
- Vaal: sword, generally curved
- Kuttu katai: spiked knuckleduster
- Katti: knife
- Kattari: native push-dagger with a H-shaped handle. Some are capable of piercing armor. The blade may be straight or wavy.
- Surul pattai: flexible sword
- Muchan / Sedikuchi: cudgel or short stick, often wielded as a pair.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Kuthu Varisai or kai Silambam

Kai silambam (lit. hand silambam) is the unarmed set of techniques in silambam, also referred to by its main component kuttu varisai. First attested to in Sangam literature of the 2nd-1st centuries BC, the term translates as "punching sequence", from kuttu meaning punch and varisai meaning order. Techniques incorporate striking, grappling, throws and locks. Partnered routines are between pairs at first before progressing to several partners at once. Preset forms gradually increase in complexity before students are allowed more and more freedom in their moves and counters. This is meant to teach alertness and how to quickly react to any situation in a fight, and is therefore used only sparingly at first. Over time, as such improvisations become more frequent, the students respond to each other with reversals and counters in a continuous unending flow, thereby naturally making the transition from arranged to free-sparring. Like many other Asian martial arts, patterns in kai silambam make use of animal-based sets including the tiger,snake, elephant, eagle and monkey forms. Advanced students are taught varma ati or the art of attacking pressure points

Training

The first stages of silambam practice are meant to provide a foundation for fighting and to condition the body for the training itself. This includes improving flexibility, agility, hand-eye coordination, kinesthetic awareness, balance, strength, speed, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular stamina.[1]

Beginners are first taught footwork (kaaladi) which they must master before learning spinning techniques and patterns, and methods to change the spins without stopping the motion of the stick. There are sixteen of them among which four are very important. Footwork patterns are the key aspects of silambam. Traditionally, the masters first teach kaaladi for a long time before proceeding to unarmed combat. Training empty-handed allows the practitioner to get a feel of silambam stick movements using their bare hands, that is, fighters have a preliminary training with bare hands before going to the stick.

Gradually, fighters study footwork to move precisely in conjunction with the stick movements. In silambam, kaaladi is the key to deriving power for attacks. It teaches how to advance and retreat, to get within range of the opponent without lowering one's defence, aids in hitting and blocking, and it strengthens the body immensely enabling the fighter to receive non-lethal blows and still continue the battle. The whole body is used to create power.

In the main stance, the staff is held at one end, right hand close to the back, left hand about 40 centimetres (16 inches) away. This position allows a wide array of stick and body movements, including complex attacks and blocks. When the student reaches the final stage, the staff gets sharpened

at one end. In real combat the tips may be poisoned. The ultimate goal of the training is to defend against multiple armed opponents.

Silambam prefers the hammer grip with the main hand facing down behind the weak hand which faces up. The strong hand grips the stick about a distance hand's width and thumb's length from the end of the stick and the weak hand is a thumb's length away from the strong hand. The weak hand only touches the stick and to guide its movement. Silambam stresses ambidexterity and besides the preferred hammer grip there are other ways of gripping the staff. Because of the way the stick is held and its relatively thin diameter, blows to the groin are very frequent and difficult to block. Besides the hammer grip, silambam uses the poker grip and ice pick grip as well. Some blocks and hits are performed using the poker grip. The ice pick grip is used in single hand attacks. The staff is held like a walking stick and just hand gets inverted using the wrist.

In battle, a fighter holds the stick in front of their body stretching the arms three quarters full. From there, they can initiate all attacks with only a movement of the wrist. In fact, most silambam moves are derived from wrist movement, making it a key component of the art. The blow gets speed from the wrist and power from the body through kaaladi. Since the stick is held in front, strikes are telegraphic, that is, the fighter does not hide their intentions from the opponent. They attack with sheer speed, overwhelming the adversary with a continuous non-stop rain of blows. In silambam, one blow leads to and aids another. Bluffs may also be used by disguising one attack as another.

In addition to the strikes, silambam also has a variety of locks called poottu. A fighter must always be careful while wielding the stick or they will be grappled and lose the fight. Locks can be used to disable the enemy or simply capture their weapon. Techniques called thirappu are used to counter the locks but these must be executed before being caught in a lock. Silambam also has many different types of avoiding an attack like blocking, parrying, enduring, rotary parrying, hammering, kolluvuthal (attacking and blocking simultaneously) and evasive moves such as sitting or kneeling, moving out, jumping high, etc. Against multiple attackers, silambam exponents do not hold out their sticks as they do in single combat. Instead they assume one of the numerous animal stances which makes it difficult for opponents to predict the next attack.

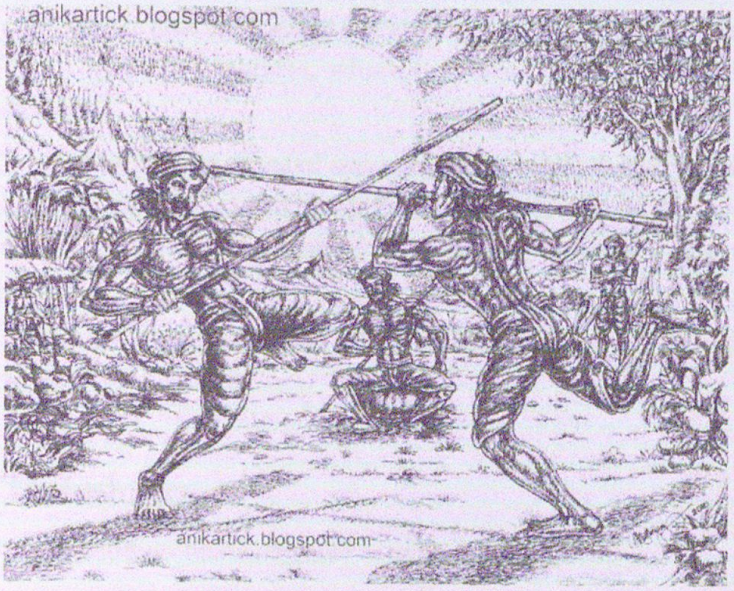
An expert of silambam will be familiar with varma adi or marma adi (pressure points) and know where to strike anywhere in the body to produce fatal or crippling effects by the least use of power.

In one-on-one combat an expert would slide the stick to opponents wrist many times during combat. The opponent may not notice this in the heat of battle until they feel a sudden pain in the wrist and throw the stick automatically without knowing what hit them. When two experts match against each other one may challenge the other that he will hit his big toe. Hitting the big toe can produce crippling effects on the fighter, making them abandon the fight. This is called solli adithal which means "challenging and successfully hitting".

Traditional masters still encourage students to live a "pure" life through daily meditation and abstaining from drinking, smoking, and meat consumption. Students who have completed the training syllabus by learning every form are considered qualified to teach. The time it takes to complete differs from one style to another. For example, the nillaikalakki style requires around seven years of training while other styles may have no articulated syllabus.

Aims & Objectives of Silambam Art

1. To promote & propagate the Art of Silambam Art as a means of sport, health improvements & self defense.



2. To accept affiliation from countries those who are interested in the art of Silambam art.

3. To provide exhibitions in the art of silabam art.

4. To promote understanding among players of all races & to provide a source of exercise for physical, mental, moral & social well development.

5. To encourage, organize, control & sponsor Silambam art as a sport in the whole world.

Skills of Silambam Arts

The main play in Silambam Art is called 'veechu & adimurai'. It should be play as much as speed of the individual. Who have their optimum level of fitness. Based on the above mentioned play is involvedin the following major Silambam Skills.

Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Tamil Nadu - Silambam

The state of Tamil Nadu is considered to be the cradle of modern and scientific staff fencing, popularly known in Tamil as Silambam. The Pandya kings ruling in Tamil Nadu promoted Silambam fencing, as did their Chola and Chera counterparts. *Silapathiharam* Tamil literature, dating back to 2nd century A.D., refers to the sale of *silamabam* staves, swords, pearls and armour to foreign traders. The ancient trading centre at Madurai city, renowned globally, was said to be thronged by Romans, Greeks, Egyptians among others who had regular sea trade with the ancient Dravidian kings. The *silambam* staff was one of the martial art weapons, that was in great demand with the visitors.

The use of the long staff for self - defence or mock - fighting was a highly organised game in the state as early as the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. In the Vedic age, young men were imparted training to defend themselves with staves, both as a ritual and an emergency. The staves wielded by ace fencers were given distinctive names, and treated with reverence. Some records trace the origin of this art to a divine source - Lord Muruga, and within the Tamil mythological framework, sage Agasthya is also credited with the genesis of Silambam. Silambam is believed to have travelled from Tamil Nadu to Malaysia, where it is now a popular recreational sport and also a mode of self - defence.

Four different types of staves are used in this activity. One produces a sonorous, swishing sound, another involves lighted balls of cloth at one end of the staves, called 'torch silambam', a third is quite short in length nevertheless powerful, and finally a non - elastic staff that produces a clattering sound.

Today this rather simplistic art form is a mode of self defence used by the common folk of Tamil Nadu.

Techniques

Silambam incorporates a range of techniques.

- a) By swift foot movements, large spheres of control can be established.

b) Both hands can be used to wield the staff.

c) Precision, force and momentum can be developed at head, shoulder, hip and leg level.

d) The cut, chop, thrust and sweep can be used to achieve mastery.

e) Development of a reflex defensive action, by concentrating on and anticipating the moves of the opponent and perfecting various kinds of feints in stroke play, can absolutely demoralise an adversary.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

The player must also be able to ward off stones hurled by a crowd, and disperse an unruly mob by a range of strokes like 'monkey hits', 'snake hits', 'hawk hits' and 'spring hits', which must be inflicted in quick succession. This activity involves some amazing footwork, staff - swinging, pivot - jumping and stroke play. From a purely defensive art, Silambam has become a combat exercise.

Silambam is a three - type contest.

a) A fight to the finish, when one of the players is dispossessed of his staff.

b) Total number of ' touches ' one combatant makes on the other (indicated by appropriate markings on the body).

c) Skill shown in protecting a pouch of money (kept at or in between a contestant's feet).

The contestant succeeding in leaving a mark on the forehead of his opponent is adjudged as the victor in the contest.

Dress

The contestants wear *langots* of various colours, sleeveless vests, turbans, canvas shoes, and a chest guard which is a part of the traditional attire of Palmyrah tree - climbers. Wicker - work shields also form an essential part of the gear.

The Contest

The contest begins with salutations to God, the competitor, the audience and the *guru*. The result is determined on the basis of the number of touches made by one contestant on another. To distinguish these touches, the ends of the staves are coated with a sticky powder that leaves behind a mark . The mark generally counts as one point, but in certain areas, a touch above the waist counts as two points, while those made below get only one point. In certain areas, the winner is one who makes a mark on his opponent's back, while in others, the contestant who makes the first three touches on the other's body wins. The contest comes to a close, after a period of time fixed well in advance of the contest, or when one of the contestants is dispossessed of his staff.

Silambam is fought on an even and hard surface, but never on a sandy or slippery area. The arena of this activity is usually circular, the radius not less than 20 ft and not more than 25 ft, when only two contestants are involved. The duration ranges from 6 to 10 minutes, which is divided into four equal quarters. An interval of one minute is allowed at the end of the first and third quarters, while at the end of the second quarter an interval of 3 minutes is allowed.

Thamizhar Martial Arts

by Alex Doss

In the Tamil country, the earliest martial arts known were Varma Kalai (pressure point attacks – similar to Tai Chi or Dim Mak), Kuttu Varisai (hand to hand combat – similar to Kung Fu and

Karate), Malyutham (wrestling), Silambam (staff and weapons fighting – similar to the Filipino arts of Arnis, Kali, and Escrima), and Adithada (kickboxing).

Martial Arts Origins

When we think of martial arts, we usually think of China or Japan. Only recently, people have discovered that martial arts had its roots in India "somewhere". The location of what part of India martial arts came from still remains a mystery to a lot of people.

Let us take note that India is a sub-continent with roughly 18 languages and various dialects of certain languages. Each state has its own language and writing script. Moreover, there are three major ethnic groups which are the Indo-Aryans of the Northern part, the Mon-Khmer of the Eastern part, and the Dravidians (Thamizhars) of the Southern part. The Indian sub-continent is more comparable to Europe geographically even though it is a country in itself created by the colonial British for their own economical achievements.

Martial arts have been in existence on the Indian sub-continent for thousands of years practiced by ancient Tamils of Tamil Nadu, Tamil Eelam (Northeast Sri Lanka), Kerala, and the Southern portion of present day Andhra Pradesh. The Malayalam language in Kerala only separated from Tamil as its own language during the 8th century A.D. In Andhra Pradesh, the southern half of that state spoke Tamil, while the northern part spoke Prairie, before the language of Telungu had formed it's own language in that state. In Sri Lanka, the whole island was Tamil up to the 3rd century B.C. before the arrival of a group of exiles from Bengal penetrated the island. They settled in the Southern and Western and Southern parts of the island. Their offspring later became the present day Sinhalese, which their language is a mixture of Tamil, Pali (from Bengal area), and Sanskrit.

The Indian sub-continent was once connected with Madagascar of East Africa and Australia by the sunken Lemurian continent of the Indian Ocean. On the African continent itself are numerous fighting styles some also in forms of dances which resemble various Kung-Fu kicks, leaps, and maneuvers. In Brazil, there is a martial art called Capoeira. It is a fighting style in a form of a dance brought to South America by slaves along with the Yaruba religion of West Africa. These ideas of combat must have crossed from both Africa and Australia through Lemuria to the Indian sub-continent which may have had an influence on the scientific Tamil martial arts thousands of years ago.

Long ago, animal fighting styles were imitated by pre-historic man which was a system for survival. The first weapon used was the stick which was an extension of the arm. Various weapons were later invented during the Stone and Iron Ages. At the turn of the 6th century A.D., martial arts spread from Southern India to China by a Tamil prince turned monk named Daruma Bodhidarma. From China, martial arts have spread to Korea & Japan. In South East Asia martial arts was introduced during the naval expansion of the Chola and Pallava Empires of the Tamil Country between the 2nd and 12th centuries A.D.

In the Tamil country, the earliest martial arts known were Varma Kalai (pressure point attacks – similar to Tai Chi or Dim Mak), Kuttu Varisai (hand to hand combat – similar to Kung Fu and

Karate), Malyutham (wrestling), Silambam (staff and weapons fighting – similar to the Filipino arts of Arnis, Kali, and Escrima), and Adithada (kickboxing).

Martial arts can also be seen in the classical dance of Bharatha Natayam. Through its rhythmic movements one can see a close resemblance to the stances, blocks, and strikes in martial arts. There is also a close affiliation to Yoga in the stretching and meditating exercises of almost every fighting art.

Martial Art Misconceptions:

During the mid-1990's the martial art of Kerala called Kalaripayattu began to gain popularity, especially in the tourist industry of Kerala. It was widely believed that the only martial art in India was Kalaripayattu, claiming to be the mother of all martial arts. In an Indo-U.S. monthly magazine called "India Currents" dated back in 1996, there was an article on Kalripayattu. It talked about a battle between the Cholas and Cheras where the Chera kingdom of Kerala were victorious in defeating the Cholas because of their knowledge in Kalaripayattu, thus "the they took to their heels and fled".

The Cholas not having knowledge in the martial arts is absolutely FALSE. It was the fighting prowess of the Cholas, and their strategic military capabilities which allowed them to expand their empire as far north to the Ganges, as far west to the Maldives, as far south to the island of Sri Lanka, and as far east to Malaysia… In India there tends to be a trend to sideline Tamil culture, even in the martial arts. Kalaripayattu is not the only living martial art on the sub-continent. It is one of many.

Kalaripayattu became an established martial art during the 13th century AD as quoted in Frank Zarilli's "*When the Body Becomes All Eyes*". The art of Kalarippayattu is a dynamic fighting system which incorporates a combination of yoga and gymnastics. It trains in an array of weaponry, empty hand combat, pressure point attacks (Marma Adi), and the healing arts of Ayurveda. The Kerala dance of Katha Kali is very close to the martial art of Kalarippayattu in its posture, stances, and foot movements.

Another misconception is in which martial art the monk Daruma Bodhidarma had introduced to China. In many articles and web sites, it claims that Bodhidarma had studied and introduced Kalarippayattu to China. If Kalarippayattu had not been established until the 13th century A.D., then how would it have been possible for this art to have been introduced to China during the 6th century A.D. (700 years back)? Also, Bodhidarma was from Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu where several martial arts there were already in existence.

In Partap Sharma's book called '*Zen Katha: Inspired by the Life of Bodhidarma, founder of Zen and Martial Arts'*, it states that it was the art of Vajramushti Bodhidarma had introduced to Shaolin. Vajramushti is a fierce style of wrestling which has it's origins in the state of Gujarat situated in Northwestern India. The only difference which sets it apart from modern day wrestling is that the contestants wore knuckledusters on their right hands to add devastating power to their one hit blows.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Vajramushti has its influences from Greek Prankrathon Wrestling during the time of Alexander the Great's conquest of the Indus Valley and Northern India. This fighting style does not resemble Kung-Fu or Karate, nor does it incorporate any other weapon other than the knuckleduster.

Many people in the western world often relate martial arts with Buddhism due to its stereo type in Hollywood films. Well, it was Buddhism which was introduced from Northern India and martial arts from Southern India. There was a very brief period when Buddhism was practiced in the Tamil country of the Southern Indian peninsula.

So, what religion do martial arts belong to? Is it a Hindu art, a Buddhist art, or of some other religion? It would be irrelevant to say that martial arts came from any religion since martial arts was originally a system of survival for early man. Religions have incorporated martial arts into their realm. In the western part of the African continent martial arts is part in the Yaruba religion. The same can be said in Asia. However, if one were to say that Asian martial arts philosophies had its roots from Buddhism, it would be false. As far as the philosophical aspect of Asian martial arts, it has its roots in Hinduism.

Take for example the famous 'Yin and Yang' symbol. It represents a combination of opposites like hard and soft, light and dark, and male and female. The origin of Ying and Yang came from the male and female Hindu deities Siva and Shakti. In Bharatha Natayam, it is said that Siva was the creator of the dance. He is known as the Natarajah, or Lord of the Dance. Likewise, he was known for the creation of scientific martial arts and the healing arts like Varma Cuttiram. Other martial arts of the Tamil peninsula on the Indian sub-continent like Silambam is said to have its roots from Siva's son, Murugan.

Even in the martial arts system of Kalarippayattu, its philosophies state that this art was created out of the wrath and fury of Siva when he destroyed the demon Dakshayaga. One of Siva's disciples, Parasurama, is supposed to have studied this art from him and passed it on to his 21 disciples in Kerala.

Daruma Bodhidarma:

Daruma Bodhidharma (Chinese: Ta Mo; Japanese: Daruma) was the third child of the Pallava king Sugandan from*Kanchipuram*, Tamil Nadu. At birth he was born with a breathing disorder and was banished by his family due to the evil practice of caste system introduced by the Indo-Aryans who had migrated from Persia (present day Iran). He was adopted and trained at birth in breathing exercises and combat, namely in the arts of Varma Kalai and Kuttu Varisai. Bodhidarma also studied Dhyana Buddhism and became the 28th patriarch of that religion.

When his master passed away, he wanted to spread his apprenticeship to other countries and moved to China. After having met emperor Wu-Di of the Liang dynasty, he settled down in the Shaolin Monastery, which is situated in the province of Henan (northern China). In the monastery, Bodhidharma lived ascetically and by meditating for 9 years developed Ch'an Buddhism (Japanese: Zen Buddhism).

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

When he taught Ch'an Buddhism, which contains elements of Dhyana Buddhism and Taoism, he realized that his apprentices did not have the mental and physical shape to really meditate, or to defend themselves from bandits. That's why he developed certain gymnastics and breathing techniques. Bodhidarma's "muscle exercises" were surely influenced by his experiences with his experience in the Tamil martial arts. The "muscle exercises" and the "18 hands of lohan", which were developed later on, are however the basis for nowadays Shaolin Kempo, otherwise known as Kung Fu.

Bodhidarma also introduced the healing art of Varma Cuttiram and herbal medicines from the Tamil country which evolved into Acupuncture, Tai Chi Chuan, Qi Gong, and Chinese medicine of today.

Varma Kalai and Kuttu Varisai:

Both Varma Kalai and Kuttu Varisai combined make up a deadly fighting art. Varma Kalai (also known as Marma Adi in Kerala) is the art of dealing with vital pressure points of the human body. The Chinese arts of Tai Chi (healing touch) and Dim Mak (death touch) are very close to Varma Cuttiram (healing touch and remedies) and Varma Kalai. In Varma Kalai one can heal, maim or even kill someone depending on what part of the body is hit and how

much pressure is applied.

In Kuttu Varisai, gymnastic, stretching (yoga), and breathing exercises are conducted before training. In combat, almost every part of the body is used such as the fists, elbow, feet, knees, etc. Various different animal styles such as the tiger, elephant, snake, eagle and monkey are used. All these styles include posture, grappling, throws, hits, and locks.

There are a huge variety of weapons used in this fighting system which can easily be seen in many Chola bronze statues of various deities. Some resemble those used by the gladiators of ancient Rome. Weapons include the trident, sticks (kali or kaji) (short, long, or double sticks), swords (val) and shield, double swords, daggers (kuttuval) (simple or double), knuckle duster (kuttu katai), and whips with several flexible and metallic blades (surul pattai).

Silambattam (Silambam):

Silambam is an ancient art of staff fencing. This was patronized by the Chola, Chera and Pandiya Kings, who ruled the country of Tamilnadu and other parts of the sub-continent. According to research this form of martial arts has been in existence for over 5000 years, even before the arrival of the Indo-Aryans. Silambam is said to be the oldest in the world since the use of the stick was the first weapon used in pre-historic times. It received royal patronage from all the Tamil Kings beginning from the sangam era. The soldiers of the King Veerapandia Kattbomman (1760 – 1799) relied mainly on their prowess in Silambam in their warfare with the British Army.

The Silappadikkaram of Tamil literature, dating back to 2nd century A.D., refers to the sale of Silamabam staves, swords, pearls and armor to foreign traders. The ancient trading centre [* File contains invalid data | In-line.JPG *]at Madurai city, renowned globally, was said to be thronged by

Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians among others who had regular sea trade with the ancient Dravidian kings. The silambam staff was one of the martial art weapons, which was in great demand with the visitors.

Some records trace the origin of this art to the Tamil deity Murugan. Silambam is believed to have traveled from Tamil Nadu to Malaysia, where it is now a popular recreational sport and also a mode of self - defense.

Four different types of staves are used. One produces a swishing sound, another involves lighted balls of cloth at one end of the staves, called 'torch silambam', a third is quite short in length but powerful, and finally a non - elastic staff that produces a clattering sound.

Malytham (Grappling):

Malyutham is similar to western wrestling. Greek Pankrathon wrestling may be related to this art since there have been much sea-trade between the Tamil country, Greece and Rome (yavanas). The art reached its zenith in Tamilnadu during the Pallava period. The temples of Mamalapuram were constructed by the Pallava king Mammala. He is said to have been a master at Malyutham wrestling. During mid-Chola period mallas (artistes) went to various parts of the sub-continent and Sri Lanka to participate in tournaments. The art was taught in ancient days by persons belonging to the Malliga Chetty community.

Here, the opponents wrestle with each other, attempting to push the other down. Various rules of the game apply to the procedure. In a tournament, wrestlers travel far and wide, challenging local wrestlers, and if they win, the name and fame of their own town or area is multiplied hundredfold.

Adithada (Kick Boxing):

Adithada is very similar to Muay Thai kickboxing. Fighters use their feet, hands, knees, elbows, and the forehead. Grappling is incorporated as part of combination moves in this fighting art for take downs. Pressure points are also targeted during dueling. This art has evolved into a dynamic fighting sport in Thailand called Muay Thai and other countries of Indo-China like Cambodia, Laos, and Burma. During the British Raj, it was the Gurka regiment who used the Brumese martial art called Bando which incorporated kickboxing in this system called Lethwei. This art of kickboxing was also used by the Gurkas in hand to hand combat against the Japanese on the Indo-Burma border during WWII.

Tamil Martial Arts in Southeast Asia:

Between the 2nd to 12th centuries AD the Cholas and Pallavas did extensive sea trade throughout Southeast Asia and China. Various countries periodically came under Tamil rule. At the beginning of

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

the 2nd century AD, Pallava prince Kaundinyan of Kanchipuram became the first king of Cambodia. Much of the historical accounts of the time can be seen in bas reliefs (carvings on walls similar to Mamallapuram wall carvings) at sites like the Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. The fighting arts and styles can be clearly seen on these walls. At the Prambanan and Borobodur temples of Java Indonesia the same can be seen in the bas reliefs of the Tamil martial arts fighting skills used by ancient warriors. During the 10th century A.D. the Chola Empire was at its peak with their expansion in Southeast Asia. Under king Raja Raja Chozhan parts of Burma, Isthmus of Kra, Malaysia, Sumatra, and Java were under his rule.

Much of the elements of Tamil culture introduced there were dance, cuisine, writing, literature, architecture, and the martial arts. Here is a list of fighting systems in each Southeast Asian country which had its roots in Varma Kalai, Kuttu Varisai, Malyutham, Adithada and Silambam.

- BURMA – Bando, Lethwei (kickboxing)
- THAILAND – Krabi Krabong, Muay Thai (kickboxing)
- CAMBODIA – Pradal Serey (kickboxing)
- MALAYA – Bersilat, Silambam
- INDONESIA – Pentjak Silat (styles vary from island to island)
- PHILIPPINES – Arnis - Kali – Escrima (stick, knife, and machete fighting), Sikaran (kickboxing), and Dumog (wrestling)

Karnataka
Kaivarasegalu, Vajra-musti kalaga, Matti kusthi, Malla-yuddha

The martial arts more prevalent in parts of North Karnataka with Garadi Mane present in every village and a head to train the youngsters into fit individuals. Kusthi, Malla Yuddha, Kathi Varase (which can be seen depicted in Veeragase and similar to sword fighting), Malla Kambha (gymnastics on a pole structure with/without rope) are some of the prominent arts practised.

The Mysore Odeyars arrange kaalaga or fights like Vajra Mushti during Dasara festival which is made less frightening these days as they are publicly staged. Rock lifting, Bull race, Kusthi, Kabaddi, are popular sports.

Malla-yuddha (Devanagari: **malyutham** kannada: is the traditional South Asian form of combat-wrestling created in what is now India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is closely related to various Southeast Asian wrestling styles such as Naban.

Malla-yuddha is divided into four types, each named after a particular Hindu gods and legendary fighters: *Hanumanti* concentrates on technical superiority, *Jambuvanti* uses locks and holds to force the opponent into submission, *Jarasandhi* concentrates on breaking the limbs and joints while *Bhimaseni* focuses on sheer strength

In Sanskrit, *mallayuddha* literally translates to "boxing match". Strictly speaking, the term denotes a single pugilistic encounter or prize-fight rather than a style or school of wrestling. It is a tatpurusha compound of *malla* (wrestler, boxer, athlete) and *yuddha* (fight, battle, conflict). The compound is first attested in the Mahabharata referring to boxing matches such as those fought by Bhima. The Sanskrit term was loaned into Tamil as *malyutham*. Another word for a sportive wrestling match or athletic sports more generally is mallakrî

a. The second element, *krî*

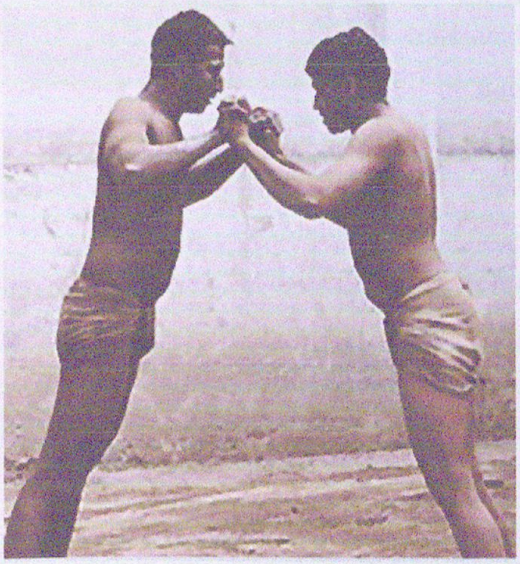
a (sport, play, pastime, amusement) implies a more limited-contact style of folk wrestling rather than true grappling combat.

The term *malla* is in origin a proper name, among other things of an asura, known as *mallâsura* and the name of a tribe mentioned in the Mahabharata. In the Manusmriti (10.22; 12.45),

it is the technical term for the offspring of an out-caste Kshatriya by a Kshatriya female who was previously the wife of another out-caste.

The first attestation of the term *mallayuddha* is found in the *Mahabharata* epic, in the context of the wrestling match between Bhimaand Jarasandha. Other early literary descriptions of wrestling matches include the story of Balarama, and the Ramayana's account of the vanara king Vali defeating Ravana, the king of Lanka, in a wrestling contest.

Stories describing Krishna report that he sometimes engaged in wrestling matches where he used knee strikes to the chest, punches to the head, hair pulling, and strangleholds. Based on such accounts, Svinth (2002) traces press ups and squats used by Indianwrestlers to the pre-classical era. Siddhartha Gautama himself was said to be an expert wrestler, archer and sword-fighter before becoming the Buddha.



The *Manasollasa* of the Chalukya king Someswara III (1124-1138) is a royal treatise on fine arts and leisure. The chapter entitled "Malla Vinod" describes the classification of wrestlers into types by age, size and strength. It also outlines how the wrestlers were to exercise and what they were to eat. In particular the king was responsible for providing the wrestlers with pulses, meat, milk, sugar as well as "high-class sweets". The wrestlers were kept isolated from the women of the court and were expected to devote themselves to building their bodies. The Manasollasa gives the names of moves and exercises but does not provide descriptions.

The Malla Purana is a Kula Purana associated with the Jyesthimalla, a Brahmin jati of wrestlers from Gujarat, dating most likely to the 13th century. It categorizes and classifies types of wrestlers, defines necessary physical characteristics, describes types of exercises and techniques of wrestling as well as the preparation of the wrestling pit, and provides a fairly precise account of which foods wrestlers should eat in each season of the year.

Traditional Indian wrestling began to decline from the 16th century under Mughal rule, as courtly fashion favoured the Persianate pehlwani style. Malla-yuddha is exceedingly rare in the northern states, but indigenous wrestling traditions and training methods survived in south India.

Matches take place in a clay or dirt pit. The soil of the floor is mixed with various ingredients, including ghee. Wrestlers begin each session by flattening the soil, an act which is considered both a part of endurance training and an exercise in self-discipline. During practice, wrestlers rub the dirt onto their own bodies. Once the arena has been prepared a prayer is offered to the gym's patron deity, most commonly Hanuman. Many practitioners live at their training hall but this is not always required. All wrestlers are required to abstain from sex, smoking and drinking so the body remains

pure and the wrestlers are able to focus on cultivating themselves physically, mentally and spiritually. A wrestler's only belongings are a blanket, a loincloth and some clothes. In this regard, they are often compared to Hindu-Buddhist holy men.

Physical training (*vyayam*) is meant to build strength and develop muscle bulk and flexibility. Exercises that employ the wrestler's own bodyweight include the sun salutation (Surya Namaskara), shirshasana, Hindu squat (*bethak*) and the Hindu press-up (*danda*), which are also found in hatha yoga.

Exercise regimens may also employ the following weight training devices:

The *nal* is a hollow stone cylinder with a handle inside.

The *gar nal* (neck weight) is a circular stone ring worn around the neck to add resistance to squats and press ups.

The gadha is a club or mace associated with Hanuman. An exercise gada is a heavy round stone attached to the end of a meter-long bamboo stick.

Training may also include rope climbing, log pulling, running and *dhakuli* which involves twisting rotations. Traditional massage is regarded as an integral part of an Indian wrestler's exercise regimen. Wrestlers are given massages and also taught how to massage.

Vajra-musti (Sanskrit: "thunder fist" or "diamond fist") refers to a knuckleduster-like weapon and also the name of ancient Indian martial artpracticed by a class of wrestlers known as*Jyecmîmalla*. The weapon is sometimes called*bhukhandi* or *Indra-mukti* which means Indra's fist. Wrestlers would compete with a *vajramusti* on one hand, from where the system gets its name.

Later examples of the weapon occasionally had blades protruding from the sides, but these were not used in vajra-musti matches. Fights were typically held during Dusara festivals.

The combatants fought either nude or wearing the same type of loincloth as modern Indian wrestlers. In the basic stance, the left arm is held out to the front with the hand open. The right arm, holding the vajramusti, is held to the side next to the waist. The left foot is placed forward while the right foot is turned to the side.

During the Mughal era, wrestlers would often use bagh nakh instead of the vajramusti. Although fundamentally similar to vajra-musti, this style of fighting was known as **nakh ka kusti** meaning

"claw wrestling" in Hindi. M. Rousselete, who visited Baroda in 1864, described *naki-ka-kausti* (nakh ka kusti) as one of the raja's favourite forms of entertainment.

The weapons, fitted into a kind of handle, were fastened by thongs to the closed right hand. The men, drunk with *bhang* or Indian hemp, rushed upon each other and tore like tigers at face and body; forehead-skins would hang like shreds; necks and ribs were laid open, and not infrequently one or both would bleed to death. The ruler's excitement on these occasions often grew to such a pitch that he could scarcely restrain himself from imitating the movements of the duellists.

The Kannada fighting arts are taught exclusively at traditional training halls or garadi mane. Disciplines include unarmed combat (kai varase), staff-fighting (kolu varase) and sword-fighting (katti varase) among various other weapons. These are most often seen today only during choreographed demonstrations at festivals.

(Sanskrit: "thunder fist" or "diamond fist") refers to a knuckleduster-like weapon and also a form of Indian wrestling in which the weapon is employed. The weapon is sometimes called Indra-mukti which means Indra's fist.

The vajramusti is usually made of ivory or buffalo horn. Its appearance is that of a knuckleduster, slightly pointed at the sides and with small spikes at the knuckles. The variation used for warfare had long blades protruding from each end, and an elaborate bladed knuckle.

History

The first literary mention of vajra-musti comes from the Manasollasa of the Chalukya king Someswara III (1124–1138), although it has been conjectured to have existed since as early as the Maurya dynasty. Matches were patronized by royalty and wrestlers thus became held in high regard. Vajra-musti and its unarmed counterpart malla-yuddha was practiced by the Jyecm+malla (lit. "the most excellent wrestlers"), a jti of Krishna-worshipping Modha Brahmins first mentioned in the 12th century. The Jyesti clan trained specifically in malla-yuddha and vajra-musti. The Malla Purana is a Kula Purana associated with the Jyesti sub-caste, and is thought to date back to the 13th century. It describes the wrestlers' diet, the preparation of the arena, and the various exercises used. By the 16th century, the Jyestimalla were synonymous with fighting, renowned athletes and professional fighters who would act as bodyguards for the rich.

During the Mughal era, Negrito aboriginals of Gujerat (sometimes mistakenly referred to in European writings as being from Madagascar due to their appearance) were trained in vajra-musti from infancy.[1] The Portuguese chronicler Fernão Nunes records the practice of vajra-musti in the southern Vijayanagara Empire.

"The King has a thousand wrestlers for these feasts who wrestle before the King, but not in our manner, for they strike and wound each other with two circlets with points which they carry in their hands to strike with, and the one most wounded goes and takes his reward in the shape of a silk cloth, such as the King gives to these wrestlers. They have a captain over them, and they do not perform any other service in the kingdom."

By the colonial period, the Jyesti clan became known as Jetti. At this time the Jetti of Baroda are recorded as practicing naki ka kusti, a form of wrestling with bagh nakh. James Scurry wrote the following account while he was a prisoner of Tipu Sultan in the late 1800s.

"The Jetti's would be sent for, who always approached with their masters at their head, and, after prostration, and making their grand salams, touching the ground each time, they would be paired, one school against another. They had on their right hands the wood-guamootie vajra-musti of four steel talons, which were fixed to each back joint of their fingers, and had a terrific appearance when their fists were closed. Their heads were close shaved, their bodies oiled, and they wore only a pair of short drawers. On being matched, and the signal given from Tippu, they begin the combat, always by throwing the flowers, which they wear round their necks, in each other's faces; watching an opportunity for striking with the right hand, on which they wore this mischievous weapon which never failed lacerating the flesh, and drawing blood most copiously. Some pairs would close instantly, and no matter which was under, for the gripe was the whole ; they were in general taught to suit their holds to their opponent's body, with every part of which, as far as concerned them, they were well acquainted. If one got a hold against which his antagonist could not guard, he would be the conqueror; they would frequently break each other's legs and arms."

After independence, the Jetti today live in Gujarat, Hyderabad, Rajasthan and Mysore. The family tradition of wrestling lost its prestige without its royal patronage. Modern Indians regarded such violent sports as barbarically outdated. Even the relatively safe malla-yuddha dwindled in popularity. Fights persisted nonetheless, typically held during Dasara festivals. Australian martial artist John Will trained in vajra-musti with one of the last masters in the 1980s, during which time the art was already nearly extinct.

Vajra-musti matches are still held during the annual Mysore Dasara festival, a tradition dating back to the Wadiyar dynasty in 1610. Unlike the bloody matches of old, modern combatants use knuckle-dusters with blunt studs. The fight ends immediately after first blood is drawn, and the referee's verdict is seldom questioned. On the rare occasion when the decision is disputed, the loser or his guru can appeal to the judges panel. The umpire and the judges are normally former wrestlers with decades of experience.

Practice

As a variant of wrestling, vajra-musti shares its training methodology with malla-yuddha. The sun salutation (Surya Namaskara), shirshasana, Hindu squat (bethak) and theHindu press-up (danda) are all used to strengthen the body and improve stamina. The only attire is a kowpeenam or loincloth. The actual vajra-musti is not used for training due to the risk of injury. Instead, wrestlers substitute the weapon with a cloth woven between the fingers. The cloth is dipped in red ochre so that hits may be confirmed.

On the day of a match, the combatants' heads are shaved, leaving only a small tuft of hair at the crown to which neem leaves are tied for good luck. A square altar is temporarily constructed in the middle of the wrestling pit, upon which a branch of the neem tree is planted so the wrestler can pray

to the goddess Limbaja. To the east of this altar a small platform is placed, upon which the wrestler's vajramusti is kept. After the prayers and rituals are completed, the weapon is tied to the fighter's right hand so it won't get dislodged during the fight. Upon leaving their family's akhara (training hall), the wrestlers make their way to the public arena which they enter in a zig-zag, jumping fashion.

In the basic stance, the left arm is held out to the front with the hand open. The right arm, holding the vajramusti, is held to the side next to the waist. The left foot is placed forward while the right foot is turned to the side. Strikes, knees, elbows, takedowns and submission holds are all employed. There is an extensive use of locks to immobilize the opponent's right arm. These locks may be applied with the arms, legs, or a combination of the two. One of the few rules is the prohibition of any attack below the waist, so major targets are the face, chest and arms.

Matches are done in submission style, going until one competitor submits, gets disarmed, or is otherwise unable to continue. Both fighters receive payment after the match, with the winner receiving double the amount of his defeated opponent. If the match was a draw and neither fighter was submitted, then the prize was shared.

There have been several queries on Vajra Musti Kalaga. Several people have either written or called to find out how the sport is played and whether they can learn it.

Well, here are some details and we hope it will be of some help.

The Vajra Musti Kalaga is a sport played in Mysore only during Dassara and that too only within the confines of the Mysore Palace.

The name of the sport has its origin in Sanskrit. The Vajra Musti refers to a knuckleduster-like weapon. It also means the weapon which is employed in this unique forms of wrestling. The weapon is called by many names such as ayudha, bhukhandi or Indra-mukti which means Indira's fist.

The Vajramusti is usually made of ivory or buffalo horn. Its appearance is that of a knuckleduster, slightly pointed at the sides and with small spikes at the knuckles. The variation used for warfare had long blades protruding from each end, and an elaborate bladed knuckle.

The Vajramusti is a fierce mode of wrestling where the combatants wear the Ayudha or Vajramusti on their right hand. This weapon has several small holes along its length, so it can be tied onto the hand with a thread. This is to ensure that it cannot be dislodged during the fight.

A weapon similar to the Vajramushti was also used by ancient Greek and Roman boxers and Pancrationists. They called it the Cestus and this was a ring, usually made of bronze, worn around the knuckles.

The first mention of vajra musti is in Manasollasa, a reference work, of the Chalukya Emperor Someswara III (1124–1138). However, history tells us that Vajra Musti was practiced even during the times of Mauryas.

The first English account of Vajra Musti is given by James Scurry (1766–1822), a British soldier and memoirist. He was captured by Hyder Ali and imprisoned in Srirangapatna for ten years from 1780.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka

After his release in 1790, he reached an English camp. He then prepared a narrative of his captivity in 1794, but it was published in 1824, after his death.

This work is called "The captivity, sufferings, and escape of James Scurry". In one of the chapters, he describes the Vajra Musti thus: "The Jetti's would be sent for, who always approached with their masters at their head, and, after prostration, and making their grand salams, touching the ground each time, they would be paired, one school against another. They had on their right hands the wood-guamootie -vajra-musti- of four steel talons, which were fixed to each back joint of their fingers, and had a terrific appearance when their fists were closed. Their heads were close shaved, their bodies oiled, and they wore only a pair of short drawers. On being matched, and the signal given from Tippu, they begin the combat, always by throwing the flowers, which they wear round their necks, in each other's faces; watching an opportunity for striking with the right hand, on which they wore this mischievous weapon which never failed lacerating the flesh, and drawing blood most copiously. Some pairs would close instantly, and no matter which was under, for the gripe was the whole; they were in general taught to suit their holds to their opponent's body, with every part of which, as far as concerned them, they were well acquainted. If one got a hold against which his antagonist could not guard, he would be the conqueror; they would frequently break each other's legs and arms".

After Tipu died in 1799, the Wodeyar Kings of Mysore continued patronising it. Over decades, it slowly lost out to other sports and was restricted to the royalty. It then became an integral part of the Dasara and came to be reduced as a ritual.

The Kalaga now precedes the Jumbo Savari on Vijaya Dashami and it is personally inaugurated by the Maharajas of Mysore. After the last Maharaja, Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar, died, it was his son, Srikantadatta Narasimnharaja Wodeyar who inaugurated this ancient sport in the palace courtyard.

The sport commences on Vijaya Dashami and it takes place at the Savari Thotti, the courtyard in the Mysorepalace. The Jumboo Savari procession commences immediately after this ritual.

This year, that is 2013, the Vajra Musti Kalaga began with Yuvaraja, Srikantadatta Narasimharaja Wodeyar, performing pooje between 9.15 a.m., and 9.25 a.m., in the auspicious Vrischika lagna.

The palace priests, Narasimha Sharma and Manjunath Sharma, chanted the slokas after which the Kalaga or fight between Jetties commenced at 9.50 am.

This year, for jetties participated in the contest. Narayana Jetty from Bangalore, Vijaykumar Jetty from Mysore, Anil Jetty from Channapatna and Shamanth Kumar Jetty from Chamarajanagar.

The contest is stooped even as the first blood spills. Narayana Jetty

drew the first blood by pinning down Mysore's Vijay Kumar Jetty. Srikantadatta Wodeyar then pierced a pumpkin with a dagger,

signaling the commencement of Vijaya Yatre or victory parade.

Senior jetties Srinivas Jetty and Tiger Balaji were the referees of the the bout.

By the way, R Vijaykumar Jetti is an autorickshaw driver from Mysore. You can ask his address

at theMysore Palace office or any autorickshaw driver hailing from Mysore.

Last year, Manjunath Jetty, a KSRTC driver, had represented Mysore and had won the bout. The KSRTC officials will have details about him, if not the conductors and drivers.

Even today, members of the Jetty or Jetti community are found in large numbers in Mysore, Chamarajanagara, Channapatna and Bangalore. They originally hailed from Delmal in Gujarat but migrated to Vijayanagar first andMysore next when they saw that the Mysore Kingdoms –of Hyder, Tipu and Wodeyars-patronised wrestling.

History tells us that the first migration of the Jettys from Gujarat was in the 11th century when the Hoysalas ruledMysore.

If you want more details abpout jettys and their art, you can contact M.R. Madhava, son of M.R. Sudarshan of the Jetty family, who lives in Mysore.

The family of Madhava is synonymous with the vajra mushti kalaga. They trace their fighting skills to the times of Tipu Sultan. When Kari Jatappa, great great grandfather of Madhava, was a Raja Vastadi or royal courtier. Another well-known Vajra musti exponent in this family is Rama Jattappa who was patronised by Mummudi Krishnaraja Wodeyar.

Rama Jatappa was considered to be invincible and people treated him with a lot of respect. They would say "Aakashakke eeni ella, Rama Jatappange kustili sati ella" (Just as there is no ladder to the sky, there is no equal to Rama Jatappa). Another wrestler in the family was M.R. Jatappa who supplied agarbattis to the palace durbar. It was famous all over India. His son was M.R. Sudarshan, who was conferred the title Mr. Body Builder Mysore and with Mr. Olympics in Madras.

Tiger Balaji, the referee is one of the five sons of M R. Sudarsha. The other brothers of Tiger Balaji are Ramji, Basavanna, Arvind and Madhav. All five were experts in wrestling and M.R. Madhava specialised in Varja Musti.

Now coming to the contact details, in case anyone is interested in getting more details about the sport or the participants, please check with the Mysore Palace Board. This board is in charge of the Mysore Palace and is involved in its day to day running. If you fail to get information here, you can contact the office of the late Srikantadatta Wodeyar and we are sure they will be happy to help you out.

There are many akhadas or wrestling house in Bangalore and Mysore and they will be able to give you more details. If you still fail to gather information, check out with the Karnataka Wrestling Federation. They should be having some information. If all this fails, head straight to Mysore, talk to the auto drivers and ask them to take you to the house of Madhava or any other Jett.

Founder Secretary
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

SATE WISE

Andhra Pradesh

Masters in Andhra Pradesh trace their lineage to the Vijayanagara empire, although their skills are said to be even older. The native system of chedi talimkhana oryudhkaushalya che talim is often abbreviated to talimkhana or simply talim. The art makes use of several weapons which are used in preset forms. These include knife fighting (baku samu), sword fighting (katti samu), and staff fighting (kara samu) in addition to other weapons such as the gada (mace) and pata (guantlet sword).

Karra Saamu: It is the stick fight performed during village festivals and marriage processions by the menfolk mainly in the villages of Guntur, Krishna, East and West Godavari districts. The performers use musical instruments like the *dappu*, "bigli" (whistle) and "taasha" which produces fierce inspiring noise. Sometimes the Karra Saamu experts fight with sticks that have flames burning at one end.

Bengal and Bangladesh

Bengali war-dances bear testament to the weapons once used in the Bengal region. Today most of these weapons are used only in choreographed fights, including dao khela(knife fighting) and fala khela (sword fighting). Traditional stick-fighting (lathi khela) is still used in free sparring today. The sticks may be short like a cudgel or a long staff. The former are sometimes paired with a shield.

Karnataka

The Kannada fighting arts are taught exclusively at traditional training halls or garadi mane. Disciplines include unarmed combat (kai varase), staff-fighting (kolu varase) and sword-fighting (katti varase) among various other weapons. These are most often seen today only during choreographed demonstrations at festivals.

Kashmir

Kashmiri swordsmanship is said to have an ancient history, but it was only much later that it acquired its modern name of sqay. Sqay survived a decline following the partition of India by adopting competitive methodologies of karate and taekwondo. Types of competition include sparring, breaking, and forms or khawankay. Pracitioners spar using fake swords called tora which are paired with a shield. Sparring is point-based, the points being awarded for successful hits with the tora or with the foot.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Maharashtra

The Marathas developed their fighting style based on the state's hilly geography. Mardani khel today teaches armed techniques for use in single combat as well as defense against several opponents. Other weapons include the sword, shield, spear, dagger, kukri, double deer horns, and bow and arrow.

Odisha

The Orissan martial art traces back to the paika class of warriors who were particularly known for their use of the khanda or double-edge straight sword. During times of peace, the paika would hone their skills through martial dances, forms-training and various acrobatics. Their descendants have preserved these exercises in training halls called paika akhada, and demonstrate them mainly through street performances. Their method of sword training called pari-khanda is still used as the first part of the chhau dance. Other weapons include the staff and guantlet-sword.

Tamil Nadu

The native Tamil martial art has come to be referred to as Silambam after its main weapon, the bamboo staff. Training begins with footwork patterns before progressing to stances and subsequently fighting techniques. Aside from its namesake, silambam includes a variety of weapons such as the sword, twin sticks, double deer horns, whip, sword, shield and sword, dagger, flexible sword and sickle. Unarmed silambam (kai silambam) is based on animal movements such as the snake, eagle, tiger and elephant. Other Martial Arts of Tamil Nadu are Varma Kalai, Adi Thadi, Malyutham and Kusthi (Boxing form of Tamil Nadu, not to be confused with North Indian Kushti which is a Wrestling art.)

Goa

Virabhadra: Virabhadra a gift from the Kannada rulers of ancient Goa is a dance cum drama form performed at the end of Shigmostav created from the matted hair of the son of Lord Shankar. In this form the actor accompanied by two other actors dance with two swords in his hands and is supported by a group with musical shouts anddances.

Gujarat

Lathi (Devanagari: means stick and also refers to an Indian martial art based on cane-fighting. The word is used in Hindi, Bengali and various other Indian languages. The lathi typically measures 6 to 8-foot (2.4 m) and may be tipped with metal. It commonly used as a crowd control device by the Indian Police and other South Asian law enforcement agencies. A lathi-wielder is known as a *lathial* or *lethel*.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

The stick is one of the world's oldest weapons. Martial artists favoured the stick for its easy accessibility, and the fact that it is not necessarily lethal made it a popular self-defence implement among Hindu priests and Buddhist monks in South Asia. Cane-fighting has a long history in Indiawhere the lathi was often carried as a walking stick or used to control herds of domestic animals. Even today, villagers often carry a parcel with their lunch (called *potli*) at one end of the lathi while resting the stick over the shoulder. If the need arose, the lathi could be used to protect the flock from thieves or in disputes between herdsmen. A common Hindi saying goes "*Jiski lathi, uski bhains*", meaning "He who wields the lathi keeps the buffalo". As the art evolved, lathi duels became especially popular in east and south Indian villages which eventually began holding regular tournaments. Village landlords would raise armies of *lathial* for security purposes and to settle conflicts. Local warlords would also use lathial armies to oppress and punish common people. The size of the army was an indication of the power of a warlord or landlord.

Following their conquest of India the Mughals introduced zamindar, which refers to intermediary landed elements with various levels of inheritable land rights. *Lathial* groups were sent to forcefully collect taxes from villagers. The zamindari system continued during British rule and wasn't abolished until after India's independence in 1947. Rich farmers and other eminent people in today's Indian villages still hire *lathial* for security and as a symbol of their power. Disputes in villages, when settled illegally, still involve *lathi* battles but this is no longer a common practice and it has largely been replaced by legal methods or, rarely, shootouts. Although lathi remains a popular sport in Indian villages, urbanisation has led to a decline of this rural martial art.

Lathi wielders must be able to fight using sticks of different lengths and thicknesses. Matches are generally one-on-one but the art also includes routines for fighting multiple opponents. Most Indian styles of stick fighting, such as silambam, use the base chakra as their energy centre. The low centre of gravity results in the techniques being performed mostly with the knees bent. In lathi however, the centre of energy is the heart chakra, so practitioners fight in a more upright position. This is believed to align the body with the earth's gravity field, encouraging energy flow to the heart and healing the body of chronic ailments or structural problems.

The British colonists introduced the lathi as a weapon for the Indian Police. This gave birth to the lathi-charge, a military-style rush that uses lathi to disperse crowds. Lathi are now often used to control riots and also as a secondary weapon. In modern times, the lathi is the primary weapon of the Indian riot police along with helmets, shields, tear gas and other methods. Policemen are trained in highly co-ordinated drill movements which can leave many of the rioters crippled. This drill has been quite controversial among human rights activists so in many places the police do not follow the drill but hit in such a way to disperse the crowds. Security guards and police officers often carry a lathi along with or in place of firearms. They prefer lathi for their ease of use and comparative safety and only resort to firearms in situations when lathi cannot be used efficiently.

Talwar Raas Dance of Gujarat

In Gujarat in one of the raas dances Kharak Khatak is used. This is in close relation to a sword. In this dance the dancers dress up like soldiers and wear tight pajama called churidar, this is accompanied with aangrakha style upper. Another fabric is tied over the waist. The speed of the

dance is excellent but at same times the feeling and the expression of soldier is not to be neglected. War tactics are clearly seen in this dance. In Rajput community this dance is more common. In the northern Gujarat this can be seen in the Thakur community. Talwar raas is also known as thaga. During fairs this dance a different out look and dancers are seen wearing high heeled leather shoes. While taping their feet these shoes releases char char sound ad for this rason these shoes are also known as charki.

Hasri is worn in the neck toda and marki in the ears are the main ornaments worn. This dance is a challenging one as dancers use swords in full swing and this takes away the heart beats of the viewers.

Dhal Talwar Raas – This Raas is performed with Real swords and Shields. Similar Music as above with same musical instruments are played but this time the singer is singing songs about war and how Maher Community solders fought in war and how they claimed victory. Clothes are very similar to the ones mentioned above. When we are performing this Raas it looks very similar to attack and defense in battlefield, again with lots of spinning, jumping etc. (10mins)

Himachal Pradesh

Thoda

Thoda, the impressive martial art form of Himachal Pradesh, relies on one's archery prowess, dating back to the days of the Mahabharata, when bows and arrows were used in the epic battles, between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, residing in the picturesque valleys of Kulu and Manali. Thus, this martial art has its origin in Kulu. Thoda, the name is derived, from the round piece of wood fixed to the head of the arrow, which is used to blunt its wounding potential.

The equipment required for this game are bows and arrows. Wooden bows measuring 1.5m to 2m, to suit the height of the archer and wooden arrows in proportion to the length of the bow, are prepared by skilled and traditional artisans.

In Himachal Pradesh, in earlier days, the game of Thoda was organised in a very interesting way. A handful of village folk would go to another village, and would throw tree leaves into the village well, before sun rise. They would, then, hide in the bushes nearby, just outside the boundary of that village. As soon as the villagers came to draw water, the youths would shout, and throw challenges to them for a fight. This would spark the preparations for an encounter.

The competition is a mixture of martial arts, culture and sport, and is held on Baisakhi Day, April 13 and 14, and community prayers are organised to invoke the blessings of the principal deities, Goddesses Mashoo and Durga.

How the game is played

Each group consists of roughly 500 people, but most of them are just dancers, who come along to boost the morale of their team. The archers are divided into parties, just before the competition

takes place. One team is called Saathi, and the other Pashi. It is believed that Pashis and Saathis, are descendants of the Pandavas and Kauravas. The target in this game is the region of the leg, below the knee, where the opponent should aim his arrow.

The moment the two contesting groups reach the village fairground, both the parties dance on either side of the ground, waving their swords, aglitter in the sun, and sing and dance to the stirring martial music. The Pashi group forms a 'chakravyuh', and blocks the Saathi group, who in turn begin to penetrate their defences. After the initial resistance, the Saathis reach the centre of the ground. Both the opponents face each other at a distance of about 10 metres, and prepare to attack. The defenders start shaking, kicking their legs to and fro with brisk movements, to thwart the accurate aim of their adversaries.

Lightning movements and agility are the sole methods of defence. The whole competition is conducted to the lively, virile rhythm of war dance, with one side furiously side-stepping, legs kicking in all directions, and other side doing its best to place an arrow on the target. There are minus points for a strike on the wrong parts of the leg.

At present, the game is played in a marked court, which ensures that a certain degree of discipline is maintained in Thoda - a happy blend of culture and sport. This game is popular in Theog Division (Shimla district), Narkanda block, Chopal Division, district Sirmaur and Solan.

Jharkhand

The **Chhau dance** is a type of tribal martial **dance** that that got its start in India. It is most popular in the states of Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal. The **dance** got its start in Mayurbhanj, a province in Orissa. There are three different types of **Chhau dance**, Seraikella **Chhau**, Mayurbhanj **Chhau** and Purulia **Chhau**. The main difference between the three subtypes is in the use of a mask. It is the belief of many modern scholars that, the word **Chhau**, is derived from the Sanskrit word Ch?ya which means mask. The **dance**,begins with the drumbeats followed by an invocation to the deity Ganesha by a singer. Once the song is complete a large number of drummers and musicians join in. A dancer dressed as Ganesha appears followed i by other characters —gods, demons, birds, animals and historical figures. The **dance** ends much as it begins,

tapering down to simple drumbeats.

Uttar Pradesh

Musti-yuddha is an unarmed martial art from Varanasi (Benares) in north India. Similar toSoutheast Asian kickboxing styles it makes use of punches, kicks, knees and elbow strikes although punches tend to dominate. Practitioners claim this style to be a complete art for physical, mental and spiritual development. Boxers toughen their hands and feet by punching or kicking hard objects such as brick or stone and they break coconuts as a test of strength. Some internal energy training is also incorporated. Matches were once held regularly in Varanasi but were eventually banned because of

the fights which often broke out among the boxers' supporters. Illegal bouts continued but became rare by the 1960s.

West Bengal

Chhau Dance

The Chhau dance of Purulia district is a sophisticated dance system in Bengal. The Chhau dance is a mask dance. There is no Chhau without mask. This dance is usually performed by male dancers. Chhau dance of Purulia has some characteristics of primitive ritualistic dance in its vigour, style and musical accompaniment mainly the drum. The symbols were once used as facial painting or body painting by dancers who were thus recognized as personifying the characters they stimulated and the masks appeared later.

Manipur

The Manipuri art of huyen lalong was once practiced by the state's indigenous hill tribes who would engage in duels governed by strict rules of conduct. The armed component called thang-ta is named after the system's main weapons, the thang (sword) and ta (spear). Practitioners spar through cheibi gatka in which a foam sword is used together with a shield. Unarmed huyen lalong is called sarit-sarak and is used in conjunction with thang-ta when the fighter loses their weapon.

Panjab

Martial arts in northwest India and adjacent Pakistan were traditionally referred to by several terms but the most common today is shastara-vidiya or "science of self defense". Swordsmen practiced their techniques either in routines using real swords, or freestyle sparring with wooden sticks called gatka, a form of stick-fighting. Gatka is associated with the Sikhs history and an integral part of an array of Sikh Shastar Vidiya. During the colonial period, the term gatka was extended to mean northwestern martial arts in general. Some aspects of the art, such as the unarmed techniques or fighting in armour, are today practiced almost exclusively by the Nihang order of Sikhs. Gatka incorporates several forms, each with their own set of weapons, strategies and footwork. In the late 18th century, this martial art further developed as a recreational game and Panjab University Lahore codified its rules for playing it as a game.

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Indigenous Folk Martial Art in India

Karnataka Sahasa Kala Academy
Near MMU College, ramadevara Bettada Road
Ramanagara - 562159

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New Delhi

Madhyapradesh - Lathi

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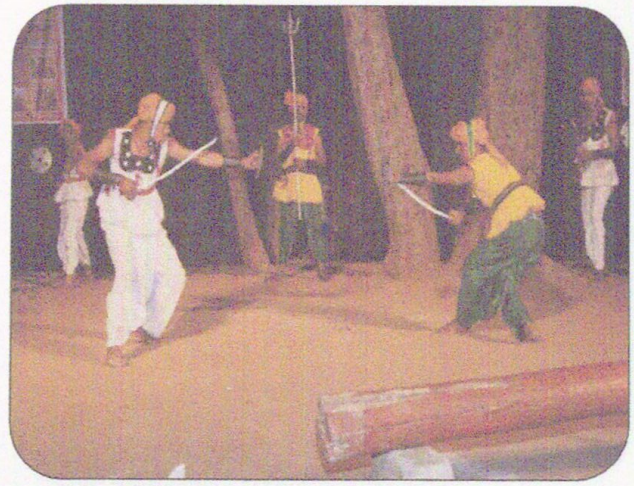

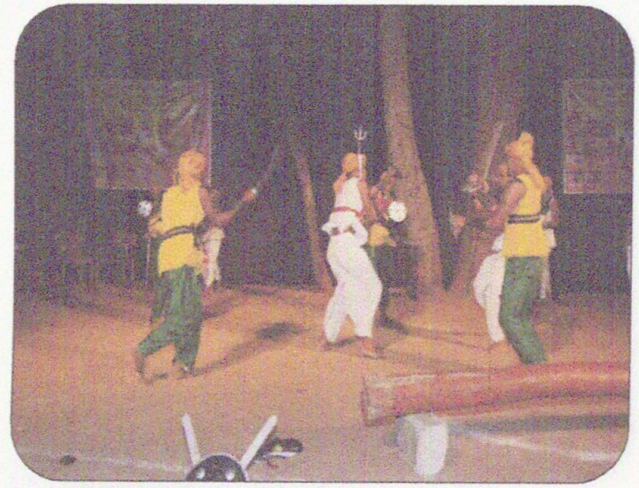

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New Delhi

Chathisghar - Akadakartab

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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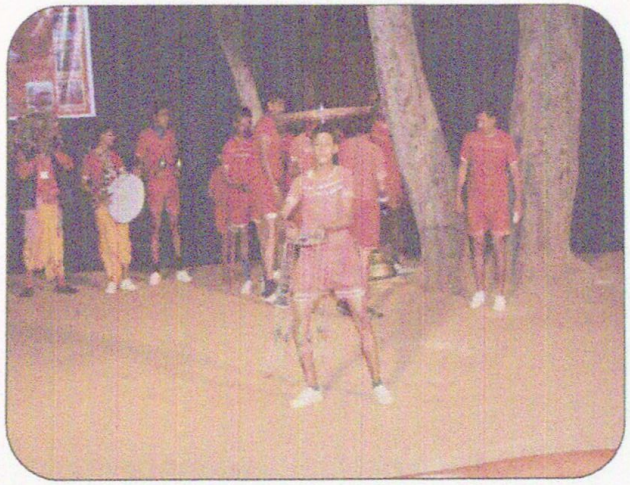

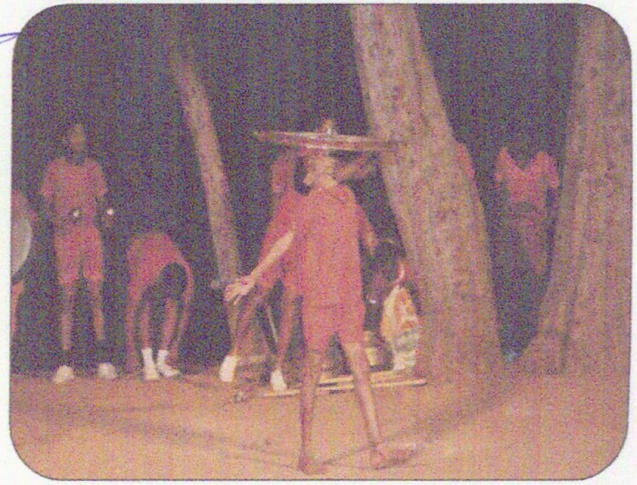

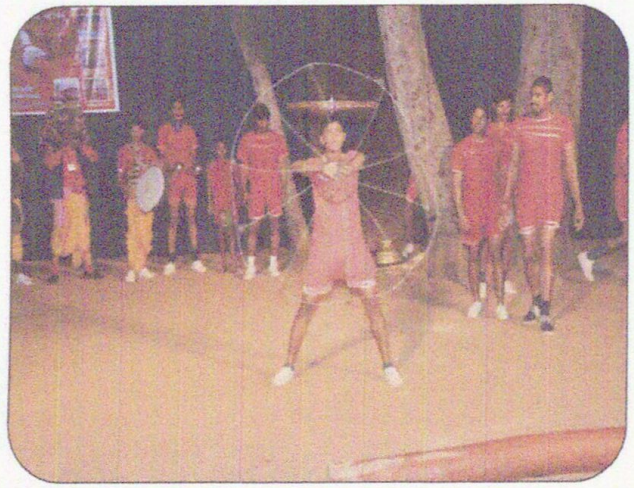

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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New Delhi

Pondichery - Acrobates

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

Karnataka Sahasa Kala Academy
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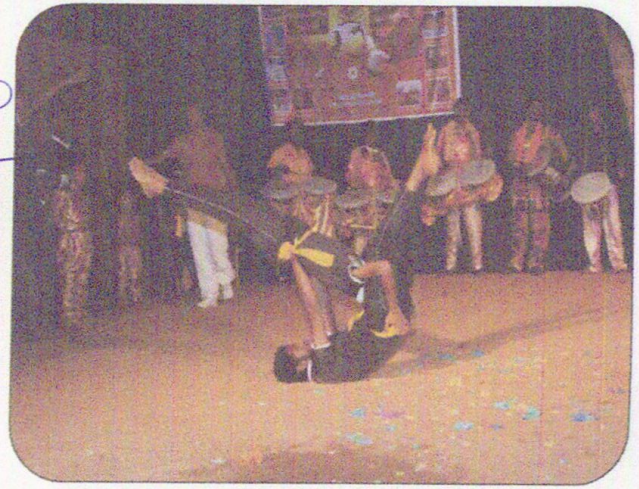

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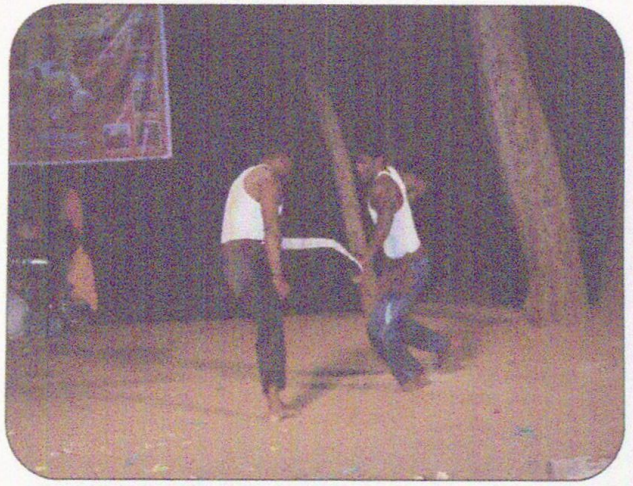
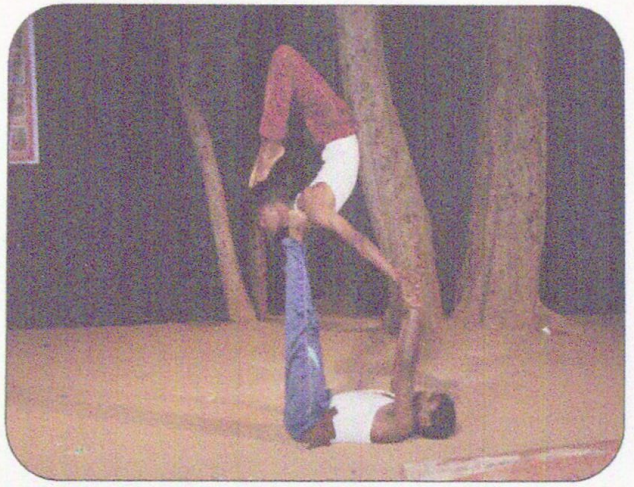
Karnataka- Acrobates & Musthi Yudha





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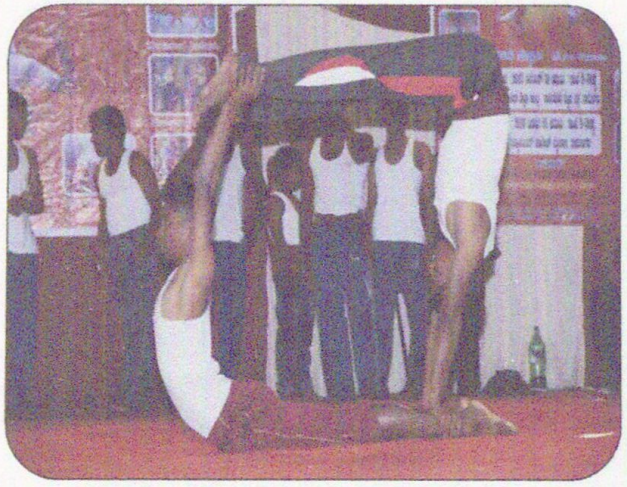
Karnataka- Fire & Acrobates



HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara
Ramanagara

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New Delhi

Kerala - Kalaripayth

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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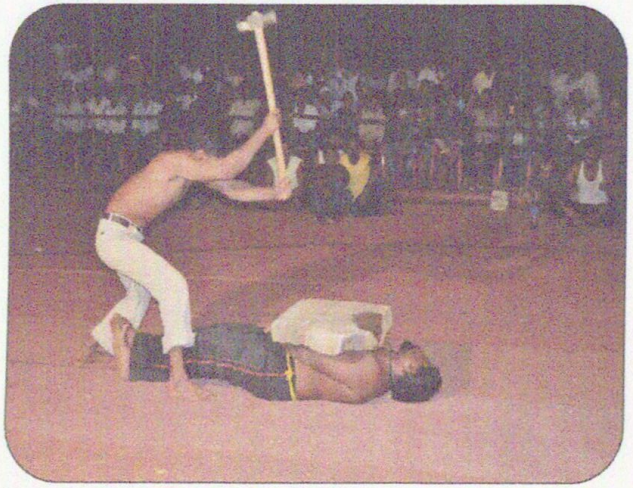
Karnataka - Pailwan Mirza



HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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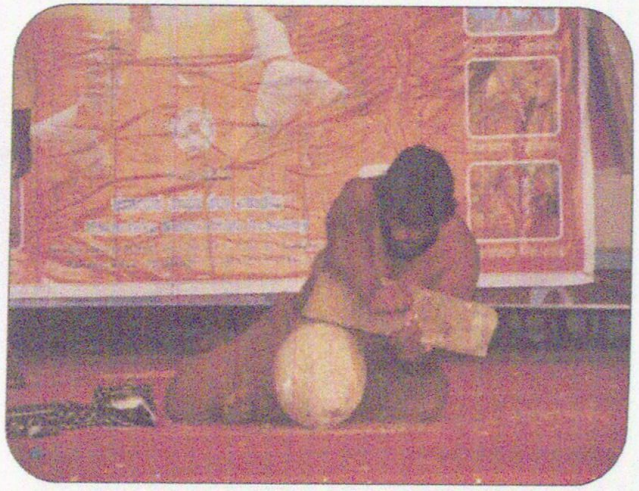

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist., Karnataka.

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Ramanagara - 562159

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Manipur - Thangtha

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Distt, Karnataka.

Indigenous Folk Martial Art in India

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Ramanagara - 562159

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New Delhi

Karnataka - Fire Work

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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Karnataka - Mallakambha

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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Karnataka - Roop Balance

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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Ramanagara - 562159

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New Delhi

Tamilnadu - Gadha Yuddha (Kalalakatte)

HASSAN RAGHU
Founder President
KARNATAKA SAHASA KALA ACADEMY
Sri Ramadevara Hills Road, Ramanagara-562159
Ramanagara Dist, Karnataka.

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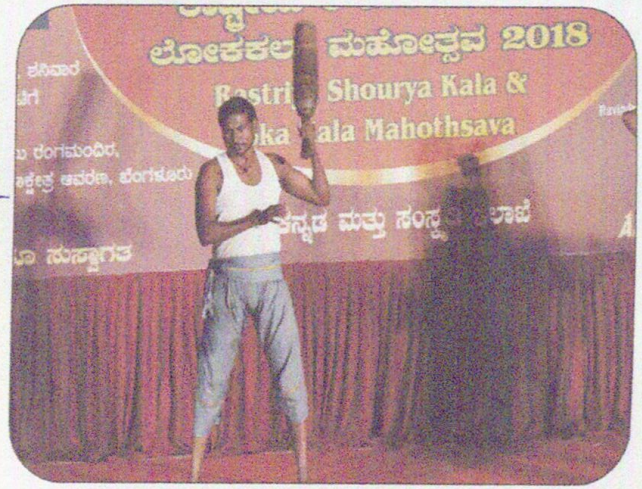
Tamilnadu - Silambatom



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Scheme for "Safeguarding the Intangible Culture Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India.

Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2011 Bangalore

Team From - Kerala - Kallari Payath








Sahasa Kala Shikshana Kendra, Ramadevara Baettada Road, Near-MMU College, Ramanagara-562159
Telefax: 080 26420027 Email:hassanraghu@gmail.com

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Sahasa Kala Shikshana Kendra, Ramadevara Baettada Road, Near-MMU College, Ramanagara-562159
Telefax: 080 26420027 Email:hassanraghu@gmail.com

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Team From - Chattisgad - Akada & Kartab






Sahasa Kala Shikshana Kendra, Ramadevara Baettada Road, Near-MMU College, Ramanagara-562159
Telefax: 080 26420027 Email:hassanraghu@gmail.com

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Sahasa Kala Shikshana Kendra, Ramadevara Baettada Road, Near-MMU College, Ramanagara-562159
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Scheme for "Safeguarding the Intangible Culture Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India.

Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2011 Bangalore

Team From - Karnataka - Kaivarase & Matti Kusthi

28th Jan 2012 - Kaivarase & Matti Kusti Troop - Karnataka








Sahasa Kala Shikshana Kendra, Ramadevara Baettada Road, Near-MMU College, Ramanagara-562159
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Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2011 Bangalore

Team From -Maharashtra - Danapatta








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Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2012 Bangalore

Team From - Pandychery - Silambatam

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Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2012 Bangalore

Team From - Karnataka - Performing Stone Balls





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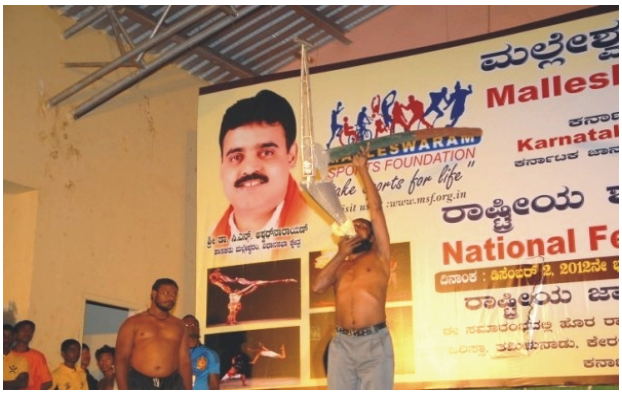
PAILWAN MIRZA SHAB FROM KARNATAKA - NOMADIC STUNTS



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TROOP FROM KARNATAKA - WRESTLING - KAIVARASE

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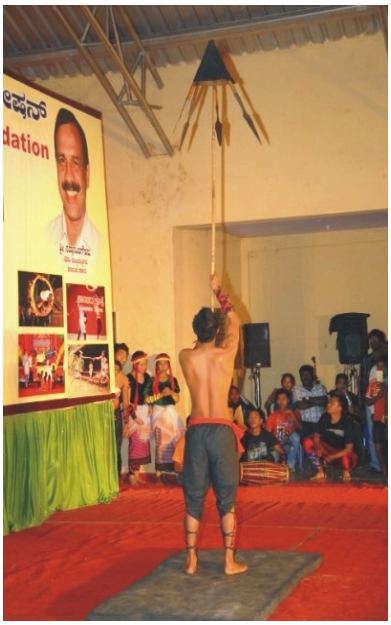
TROOP FROM MANIPUR - THANG- THA



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TROOP FROM PONDICHERRY - SELAMBATAM

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TROOP FROM TAMILNADU - SELAMBATAM

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TROOP FROM ANDHRAPRADESH - KARRASAMU-KATHISAMU

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Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2012 Bangalore

Team From - Kerala Kallary Paith




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Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2012 Bangalore

Team From - Karnataka - Traditional Drum




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Akhila Bharatha Shourya Kala Mahotsava Shourya Parva - 2012 Bangalore

Team From -Karnataka - Kaivarasegalu

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